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"BETWEEN TWO FIRES"



THE ROYAL PALACE

King Oscar II. of Sweden and Norway, and His Family :

A FEW CHARACTER SKETCHES

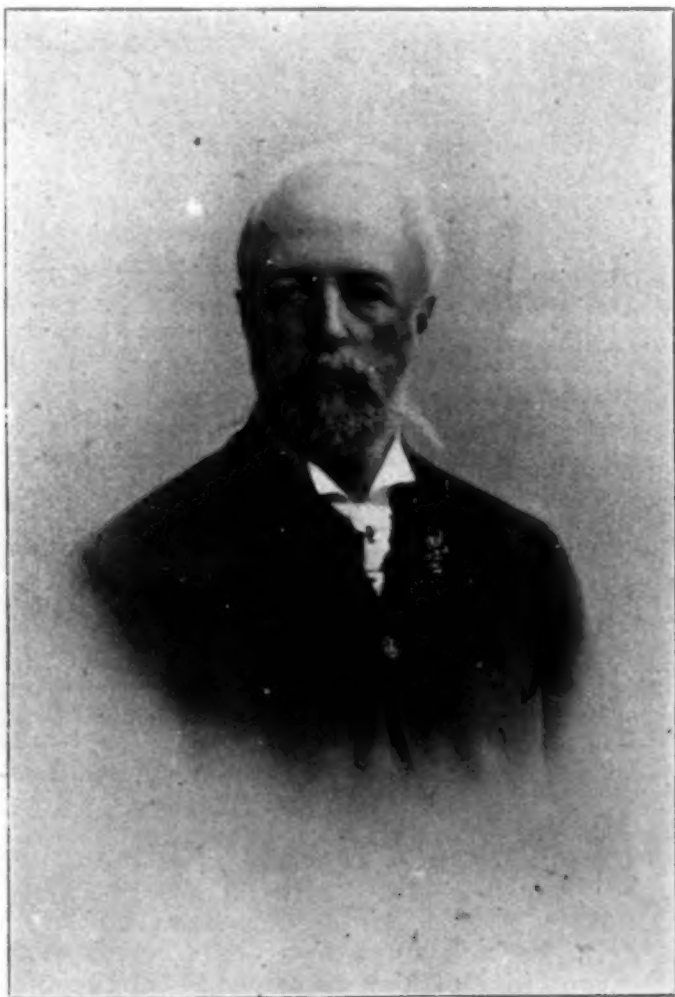
WRITTEN BY A. DE BURGH. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS

OF the various families for whom Napoleon the Great found thrones none is any longer in possession of a crown, except that of Marshal Bernadotte, of which Oscar II., King of Sweden and Norway, is the present head. He is now nearly seventy years of age, though he looks much younger, and has wielded the sceptre since 1872. He is six feet high, and is an extremely handsome man ; is very reserved, and not very popular with his subjects. He is a scientist of eminence, and a short time ago was made honorary member of the Imperial Society of Naturalists of Moscow. He had conferred upon him the degree of D.C.L. by diploma

of Oxford University, on the completion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession to the throne, and he is a member or correspondent of most scientific societies of the world. King Oscar of Sweden was selected, some three years ago, as the arbitrator in our Venezuelan frontier dispute, as he is renowned for his extreme impartiality. A typical example of this was shown in his treatment of the Norwegian playwright, Bjørnsen. The King, as is well known, possesses considerable ability as poet and author. Bjørnsen somehow believed that the King had mercilessly criticised one of his plays, and, regarding this more in the light of a piece of jealous spite on the part of a rival than as a criticism,

he boldly challenged King Oscar to fight a duel. Democratic and simple as is the King of Norway, this step of Bjørnsen was regarded as beyond the bounds of loyalty, and the playwright was forced to flee his native country, on a charge of *lèse-majesté*. This was as far back as 1879. Thirteen years later the King conferred upon Bjørnsen—whose rabid Republicanism has never

attendants, and arrive back at the palace alone, and sometimes drenched through to the skin, for he can rarely be persuaded to carry an umbrella. He is a tender and devoted husband, and very much attached to his home and family. When he was staying in Paris a little while ago, the papers noticed that he wore the ribbon of the Legion of Honour, and another, which



KING OSCAR II. OF SWEDEN

been concealed—the Grand Cordon and Star of the Order of St. Olaf, in token of his services to Scandinavian letters.

Oscar II. is a hardy and muscular monarch, and very fond of hunting. His favourite sport is stalking the chamois. He is also an ardent pedestrian, and thinks nothing of going for a twenty-five mile walk between breakfast and late dinner. On some of these expeditions he will quite outstrip all his

was declared to belong to some Swedish decoration. As a matter of fact, this latter token of distinction was attached to the medal of the French Humane Society, and was earned by His Majesty thirty-three years ago, when he only enjoyed the title of Crown Prince. He happened to be walking on the Carnice Road just as a runaway carriage and pair dashed towards him, when, with great presence of mind, the young

Prince ran at once to the horses' heads, and succeeded in stopping them before any serious consequences ensued. Oscar resembles, in one respect at least, our late Grand Old Man, being an expert at felling trees, and enjoying the exercise very much; and it is said no man can beat him at it. Another peculiarity of the King is that he prefers a pipe to the best Havana which may be had.

reign who makes use of his crown most frequently. Of the two united kingdoms over which he rules, Sweden is the richest and most important one, containing the large, fine capital, Stockholm. His position as King is by no means a bed of roses, and the agitation about Home Rule, though a long and fierce one, is still far from a settlement, as we heard not long ago from Chris-



THE CROWN PRINCESS OF SWEDEN

He is said also to be a financial genius, and has made enormous sums of money by the rebuilding of Stockholm. He has at different times privately bought up out-of-the-way slums in that city, which have afterwards been redeemed by the Council, or Crown, for the purpose of creating new squares, parks, and streets.

Though a simple and unaffected monarch, King Oscar of Sweden is a Sove-

tania, the capital of Norway, that a measure had been passed in Parliament to introduce a purely Norwegian flag, without the emblem of union with Sweden. For many years Norway and Sweden have possessed separate ensigns, both for the Navy and for the Mercantile Marine; but hitherto they differed only in respect to colour, being identical in pattern. The Norwegian flag has a blue cross on a red ground,

and that of Sweden a yellow cross on blue ground, each ensign bearing in its upper left-hand corner a small red, blue and yellow design, somewhat resembling the little flag in the corresponding part of the British ensign, and symbolical of the union of the two countries. It is the omission of this sign that will constitute the new departure. It is difficult to foresee the

Majesty of the pupils, "the names of the great kings of Sweden?" "Gustavus Adolphus," cried one. "Charles XII.," said another. "Oscar II.," stammered one of the smallest, who was a little courtier in her way. Surprised, the King went up to her, and asked her to tell him one of the great events of his reign. The child hesitated, then blushed, and finally, in



THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN

ultimate issue, as Home Rule has not proved a success in any country so far.

One of the most remarkable characteristics for a man of King Oscar's nature is the great interest he takes in children and their education. He frequently pays visits to the schools. Quite recently he was inspecting a class of young girls, who were, naturally, much overcome by a visit from the King. "Can you tell me," asked His

tears, murmured, "I don't know any." The King kindly stroked the little one's hair, and said, "Don't cry, my dear child; I don't know any myself."

The Queen has created lately quite a sensation at Stockholm on account of her devotion to the Salvation Army. Her fascination for this sensational work of the soldiers of "General" Booth has been more and more manifest of recent years, and now Her



ROYAL VILLA NEAR CHRISTIANIA

Majesty gives the greater part of her time and mind to fostering the already very comfortable "homes" throughout Sweden and Norway, in which work she is assisted by her second son Oscar, who is a naval officer and street preacher at the same time. He is well known in England on account of his morganatic marriage with a young maid-of-honour at Bournemouth some years ago. The Queen neglects to a great extent her duties towards her husband, and sincere sympathy is felt for the King in his loneliness; and his most intimate friends express their feelings plainly as to the rare attendance of Her Majesty at Court functions. The many really deserving poor of Stockholm also complain that they receive little assistance unless they join the "Army." The good which it is intended to do by establishing the "homes" is in no way unmitigated, as their comforts are inducements to able-bodied and healthy men and women to escape work; and recently the head contractor for the cleansing of the capital lodged a complaint with the authorities that he could not proceed with the work owing to the scarcity of labour. When he applied to the Salvation Army Home, and offered good pay, the inmates refused to come out. "They were so comfortable, thanks to Her Majesty," they said.

The new departure in the Queen's life is by no means popular, and many call her "a Salvation lass"; however, the whole Royal Family, with the exception of the King, is renowned for its great piety, almost bordering on fanaticism. The Crown Prince himself is ready to go down the slums at the head of a band, and preach the Gospel, following in this his younger brother whom we mentioned before.

The youngest of the Royal sons, Prince Eugene, whose name was mentioned some time ago as an aspirant for the hand of the young Queen of Holland, has very democratic tendencies. He loves to wander over the hills in Norway, with only one or two companions. He sits down at a small table in the country inns in the evening to his simple meal of tea and fish, or, perhaps, to a glass of beer, and goes about without either looking for or receiving any more attention than anybody else.

When he finds himself outside his father's territory, he is even more unrestrained. He spent three years in the Latin Quarter of Paris, studying sculpture; and not long ago he was an art student in Florence, living among students, and refusing all intercourse with Royalties.

Like the old King, all the members of the Royal Family possess good

looks, and the Crown Prince and Princess are an extremely prepossessing couple. The Prince is a martyr to toothache, as he has every one of his teeth barred, that is to say, a bar of bone runs through the roots of every tooth, and this has to be crushed before a single one can be removed.

We do not intend in our present paper to do more than give character sketches of the King of Sweden and Norway, and some members of his family, but for those who always take interest in the financial position of crowned heads we

will mention that the Royal family have a civil list of about £78,000 from Sweden and £25,000 from Norway.

Stockholm is so well known, and the royal palaces in Sweden have so often been brought before the public, that we reproduce here two of the royal residences in Norway, with which our readers are less well acquainted, namely the royal palace at Christiania, and the charming royal villa in its neighbourhood, "Oskarsholm." We also reproduce the most recent photographs of the King, the Crown Prince, and Crown Princess.



FORGET-ME-NOTS



THE orchid rare, beyond compare,
Is not more dear to me
Than the simple hue of the violet blue,
Or the pale anemone;
But the dearest flower within the bower—
Though others may think not—
Is the one that grows where the mill-stream flows—
The sweet Forget-me-not!

The rosebud red, or the drooping head
Of the arum lily tall,
And such as these may others please—
There's charm in each and all.
The primrose, too, of pale gold hue,
A grace of its own has got;
Yet it cannot bring such a breath of Spring
As the sweet Forget-me-not.

HORACE WYNDHAM

A STORY of The FAR WEST.



RELATED BY ELLA STONE. ILLUSTRATED BY G. MONTEITH DODSHON

THE fact is, my dear fellow, in these days it is almost impossible to be original. Every conceivable complication in the web of human destiny has been twisted and unravelled; every possible obstacle placed in the course of true love has been removed or stumbled over, as the case may be, by the multitude of writers who crowd the ranks of literature, until the imagination is fairly baffled, and knows not where to find 'fresh fields and pastures green.'

So I replied to a remark made by an old college chum on the triteness of certain short stories which had just appeared in a new magazine.

As a scribbler—in a humble way—myself, I felt bound to say a word in defence of my fraternity.

My friend was a man of action, a traveller, and a hunter, who had but just returned from a visit to North-West America and Vancouver's Island; and as we sat smoking our pipes by the blazing fire in my study, while a pitiless snowstorm raged without, he had been telling me of different hunting adventures he had met with, until our conversation drifted into this new channel.

He carefully knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and began to refill it before he replied—

"Then, my dear Bob, why, in the name of fortune, do you not let imagination have a rest, and make use of facts? It is a true adage that they are 'stranger than fiction.'"

"And pray, where would you glean your facts?" I asked, somewhat contemptuously.

"Emphatically not from the Newgate Calendar, nor the records of the Divorce Courts," replied my friend; "but in many a lonely log shanty in those primeval Western forests where I have been wandering, there may be gathered tragedies as thrilling, love stories as tender, as ever fed the imagination of poet or novelist, and to my mind they have a freshness that is lacking in the stories of this over-civilised land."

"You have something in your mind. Well," I said, "come now, let us have your yarn."

"It is true your words recall a story to my mind," he confessed, "and I will tell it you, as far as I can, as it was told to me; but you must remember I heard it from the chief actor in the drama in the white heat of strong emotion, that

all around us lay the vast forest, with its giant trees and wild morasses, the actual scene of the tragedy, and that the narration was interrupted by the sighing of the wind amongst the leaning trees, which as they clasp one another, and are moved to and fro by the fitful breeze, send out long shrieks and moans almost like a human soul in agony. Told in this quiet room, without any such accessories, it may not impress your mind as it did mine."

"Never mind that, old fellow, fire away. I think on the whole I prefer our present surroundings, and am ready to sacrifice dramatic effect to comfort," I replied, as, heaping more coal on the fire, and drawing my easy chair up to it, I prepared to listen to my friend's story, which I will now give in his own words, without further comment.

"In the early part of last summer," he began, "I was on a hunting expedition up the coast of Vancouver's Island, with two Indians to take charge of my comfortable camping outfit and canoe, and also to act as guides. They used to row me from point to point by the many narrow inlets which indent the coast, some of them winding their tortuous way between densely-wooded hills and frowning cliffs for as much as twenty miles into the mainland. Then landing, I would stroll out into the woods for game, or lazily lie on my pile of rugs by the camp fire; while my companions, with a hook and a bit of red flannel for bait, inveigled the fat trout out of his native waters, or trolled for salmon, which at that time of the year were coming into the bay in innumerable shoals, so that in the twilight we could hear an incessant flip-flapping as they leaped up in the water, and often almost stranded themselves on the beach.

"One afternoon I wandered off as usual, alone, following a road that seemed to lead into the heart of the woods for nearly two miles, when I came suddenly upon a broad stream, which crossed the road. Over this was a marvellously-constructed bridge, formed of small trees so arranged that it looked as if it needed only the lightest footsteps on the lower side to tilt it bodily into the dark, gloomy waters that flowed beneath.

"I stood a moment considering whether to trust myself to this frail foothold, when something stirred in the bushes to my left, and turning round I saw a great black bear suddenly come into view, and as suddenly plunge crashing and blundering through the thicket away from me. I had not seen one of these animals in the woods before, though they are common enough, and, the instinct of the hunter strong within me, I cocked my rifle and followed on its trail. A little more experience would have taught me the fruitlessness of the chase, for the under brush was so thick that man or beast could have lain within a few yards of me, perfectly hidden from the most jealous scrutiny.

"However, without thought of this, on I went, over the logs, over the stream, past dank green morasses, with clumps of 'hard hack,' and the prickly poisonous 'devil's club,' until at last the gathering darkness warned me that I must quickly retrace my steps, or run the risk of being benighted in the woods, no very pleasant experience. I had not walked far, when I saw between the trees a large opening, and pressing over a gentle rise found myself overlooking a swamp, partly under cultivation, on which was a comfortable looking log house, prettily situated on a grassy knoll, with tall pine trees for a back ground, and away to the left, a long range of mountains just tipped with snow.

"I went up to the door and knocked, but as there was no response, I was turning away, when I saw a man coming across the clearing in the direction of the house.

"He was evidently unaware of my presence, and as he walked towards me, his eyes fixed on the ground, I was struck by the utter dejection and melancholy of his gait.

"He was a tall, well-built young fellow, but his shoulders were bent, and his head bowed as if beneath a heavy load; his black hair was long and uncared for, and his dark piercing eyes, which he lifted as he heard my steps advancing to meet him seemed to reveal unfathomable depths of sorrow.

"He hastened forward as soon as he saw me, and a slight gleam of pleasure

crossed his face, it seemed almost as if he had expected me.

"'You have lost yourself in the woods?' he asked, leading the way into a large and rudely furnished, but spotlessly clean, apartment.

"I explained the cause of my wandering, while he busied himself with

began to realise that I was ravenously hungry, and that these simple viands would be more delicious to me than any delicacies I had ever tasted.

"'You have certainly wandered from the beaten track,' said my host; 'few discover this little clearing. But you are very welcome; you are the first



"'YOU HAVE LOST YOURSELF IN THE WOODS?' HE ASKED"

heaping logs on the blazing fire, and making preparation for a substantial repast of fried ham and eggs, spreading clean newspapers over his home-made table, and producing out of a large tin steamer, some excellent bread and fresh butter until, as the ham frizzled and spluttered on the frying-pan, and the fragrant scent of coffee filled the air, I

visitor who has crossed my threshold for the last six months, and, strange and incredible as it may sound to you, I dreamt last night of your coming.

"'You dreamt of my coming?' I repeated in amazement.

"'Yes,' he replied, 'I saw you in my dream, standing by the door as distinctly as I beheld you with my bodily eyes a

few minutes ago, and it seemed to me that you did me a great service, though what service any one can render me, I cannot guess. But come, supper is ready; draw up to the table, you ought to have a hunter's appetite.'

"I gladly accepted the invitation, and, during the meal, the gloom lifted somewhat from my companion's brow, and we became quite sociable, discussing the prospects of agriculture in the country, while he explained to me the hard and laborious processes of clearing and draining, ploughing and harrowing the land, which are necessary before the rich, black, turfy soil will yield her wealth in waving, golden corn and fresh, sweet grass. It was quite plain to me that he was a man of intelligence and education, and I was greatly interested in him, and puzzled to account for the loneliness of his life, and the settled gloom of his aspect.

"When our meal was ended I rose to go, but he held my hand, saying in agitated tones, 'You will stay the night with me? Do not go, I beg. I feel a strange impulse to tell you my story, to tell you what I have never yet told to mortal man.'

"My Indians will be looking for me,' I began; but, at that moment, a step was heard outside, and one of my attendants, Old George, put his head in at the door, grunted in his guttural way, and stared at us both.

"Ah! now I can send a message, and will gladly stay with you, if you wish,' I exclaimed, and turning to the Indian, I bade him return to camp, saying I would be with him first thing in the morning. He looked round suspiciously, and, muttering a few words in his own tongue, departed, leaving us once more alone.

"It was quite dark, but the fire lit up the room with a curious flickering light, its brightest rays falling on the haggard face and wild, gleaming eyes of my host, who sat gazing into its depths with a strange, far-off look.

"For some moments there was a silence which grew almost oppressive, and then he turned suddenly to me, saying in a hoarse, choked voice:

"Sir, you see before you a man who bears on his forehead the mark of Cain,

who, like that first murderer, has fled from the haunts of men, and feels that the punishment of his sin is greater than he can bear. Hark,' he said, sitting suddenly upright, and lifting up his hand. 'Do you not hear it? It is the voice of my friend's blood crying out from the ground for vengeance against me, his murderer.'

"A strange weird cry, twice repeated, rang through the still night air, and a cold shiver thrilled me, but I replied with what composure I could, 'Surely that was an owl's cry?'

"Was my companion mad? The thought was not a pleasant one, and he might have read it, for he said, more quietly, 'Do not fear, sir, I am not mad, though the life I have led and the remorse I have suffered for the sin of a few brief moments might well have made me so, but I have worked hard, and that, I believe has saved my reason. If you will have patience with me, I will tell my story as briefly and as calmly as I may. But I must begin at the beginning.

"Frank West and I had been close friends all our lives—though I was the youngest son of a poor parson with eleven children, and he the only child of the wealthiest landowner in our parish, and my one regret, when it was decided that I should come out here to seek my fortune, was that Frank could not accompany me. We had always agreed in the dear old days, when we used to read books of thrilling adventure up in the hay-loft at the vicarage, that we would go out together, and Frank's last words, as he came with my father to see me off, were, "Never mind, old fellow, just wait till I've taken my degree, and see if I don't come out to pay you a visit, and we'll have no end of fun together."

"The first two years of my life out here were very happy ones. Of course there was plenty of hard work, but there was plenty of fun and pleasure too. I was young and strong, all was new, all was interesting, and I made many friends amongst the kind hospitable settlers at the Bay. But my nearest neighbours and closest friends were the McKays, a Scotch family. The two sons, Alec and Kinloch were



"OLD GEORGE PUT HIS HEAD IN AT THE DOOR"

my constant companions, while their only sister, Margaret—the sunshine of the whole Settlement, with her golden hair, her sweet blue eyes, her ringing laugh, her bright helpful ways—how can I tell you of her? And for a moment the poor fellow broke down, hid his face, and sobbed. Recovering himself, he went on, 'How I loved her no words can tell! She always treated me with the same frank, sisterly kindness she showed her brothers, but somehow I never doubted that she returned my love, and only waited until I had made a good home for her to declare it and claim her as my bride. If I had but

spoken then, all might have been different. One morning a letter came from Frank; he was coming out by the next steamer to pay me his promised visit. I was overjoyed, and hastened to the McKays to tell them the good news. "You are sure to like him," I declared; "he is a favourite wherever he goes, he is so merry and genial."

"And so it proved; they and all the neighbours vied with each other to welcome the new comer with dances, moon-light drives in the big waggons, pic-nics and boating expeditions, and, though at first, I did not notice this—at every merrymaking his place was by

Margaret's side, while she and I seemed to drift farther and farther apart.

"The first time I awoke to this fact was at a dance at the McKays'. Margaret and I were just taking our places amongst the dancers when Frank came up, and declaring she had previously promised him the dance, half laughingly, half seriously, insisted on his rights, saying as he carried her off with a triumphant, almost mocking smile, "You don't mind, I know, Charlie."

"Mind? When I was half mad with rage and jealousy.

"All the way home that night Frank rattled on about her. "Remember, old chap," he said, "you are not to try and run me off. I claim the pretty Margaret as mine. By Jove! I wonder what the governor will say when he hears his only son and heir has lost his heart to a milkmaid who makes the best of bread and delicious butter. I wonder whether she would look as charming in the drawing-room at Sedge Bank as in a settler's log hut? It will require some courage to face it up."

"How my blood boiled to hear the woman I almost worshipped thus spoken of, yet, coward that I was, I never declared my love, and defied him to take her from me.

"Was he in earnest? I could not tell, for as we parted he bade me a laughing good night, saying, "Don't look so glum, old boy; you know I always like to tease you."

"So I tried to put the thought from me until one night, in the gloaming, he told me in more serious mood of his happiness, and that Margaret had that day promised to be his wife.

"It was too dark for him to see my white, drawn face, and I did not betray my feelings, but all through the long night I fought a fierce battle with myself, and I believed I had conquered.

"If she were happy I would be content. Towards morning I had fallen into a troubled sleep, when Frank's joyous voice aroused me. "Come, Charlie, get up! Let's have a day's hunting, I am too restless for anything else, besides, I want to shoot a deer for Margaret, and if you don't come with me, I shall get lost as usual."

"I arose mechanically, and went with him. We were not successful in meeting with a deer, and beat the woods till late in the afternoon, when we came to a large swamp about a mile distant from my claim, where we perceived traces of one. "Let's divide," Frank cried, "you go round the side nearest home, and I will circle round the other way and meet you at the north end. Shout when you get there, and if I'm first I'll shout to you."

"I tried to dissuade him—for that at least I am thankful—saying he would inevitably turn south instead of north and lose his way. But he was only the more determined to go, declaring "A baby could not go wrong there."

"So away he went, gaily whistling "The Girl I left behind me."

"I tramped silently through the woods on the borders of the swamp, irritated almost to madness by the sound of his happy voice and the tune he whistled, feeling my friendship for him turned for the time to the bitterest hatred.

"Ah, the devil is not vanquished in one conflict! and as, having reached the place of meeting, I rested myself and my rifle against a tree, and waited for Frank, the old battle had to be fought anew; the agony of jealous pain, of love and passionate longing to be wrestled with once more.

"No wonder I forgot my promise to shout. I was utterly unconscious of the flight of time, when all at once, a long drawn out cry fell on my ears. It sounded rather like the hooting of an owl, and yet I felt certain in my inmost soul that it was Frank's cry for help; and I—my worst self, for it seemed as if there were two persons leaning on that rifle and struggling for the mastery—said, "Why answer it? It is probably an owl! If he is lost, so much the better."

"My heart beat wildly, almost to suffocation; my better self whispered, "He is your friend, answer the cry, that *can* do no harm, even if you are mistaken in supposing it his;" but the whisper was faint and feeble, a louder voice cried, "Fool, fool, it is an owl, don't you see his great white ghostly wings through the mist and fog, rising over the dark green

weeds? Frank has gone home, he had the easier road to take."

"And I turned on my heels and went home to seek him—conscious all the while that he was not there—that *I hoped* he was not there—that he was lost!

"I opened the door, all was darkness and emptiness! Faint and giddy, I leant against the door-post, the evil spirit fled from me, and I felt—O God! the horror of that thought!—that if I did not find Frank I was a murderer. I rushed back by the way I came, firing my rifle and crying on him by name; but though I strained my ears for some answering voice, all was silent as the grave.

"Then I went down to the Settlement and spread the news. They tried to calm my excitement, telling me of people who had been benighted and returned safely with the morning light, but my fears were contagious, they began to feel that something must have happened, and soon organised a search party.

"About a hundred of us in a long spread-out line, each within calling distance of the other, tramped through the forest, going straight on over every obstacle. For days we searched, then they began to say he might have made his way to the nearest town, and taken passage for England, he could hardly have disappeared otherwise leaving no trace. Perhaps he had only been flirting with Margaret McKay, and took this way of getting out of the entanglement. In fact all sorts of suggestions and surmises were rife.

"But I—I, alas! knew that I had heard my poor friend's last cry, and disregarded it, and that somewhere there lay his lifeless body.

"Every one showed a quiet, unspoken sympathy with me in my sorrow, and Margaret, who shared it, drew closer to me, until as the bright summer days returned, and Time, the healer, laid his hands upon our hearts, my old hopes began to revive. We often went boating together, and one day she said she wanted some grebe skins, would I get them for her? I was only too willing to comply. The happiness of floating on the broad beautiful river, with her sweet face before me, strangely sad and wistful still, yet responding with cheer-

ful, self-forgetting sympathy to my every mood, was almost intoxicating, and I felt that morning that I must tell her of my love.

"We were drifting lazily with the current, and there was no occasion for me to use the oars. "Margaret," I began. I do not know if there was anything in my tone that warned her, but she interrupted me, pointing to a bird in the distance and saying: "Look, Charlie, there is a lovely grebe. I only want one more, and then we can return."

"I fired, and the bird fluttered down; flapping its white wings, and uttering a cry so like that one heart-rending cry I heard that night on the darkening swamp that I dropped my rifle in horror. Margaret's words recalled me. "Row round the bushes into that narrow slough, Charlie; the bird has fallen amongst the tall grasses."

"I obeyed mechanically, and as Margaret parted the bushes, and stood up eagerly to seize the bird, I saw her face whiten with a look of intense horror, her eyes were fixed in a frozen stare on something behind me, then, with a wild piercing shriek she threw up her arms, and dropped as one dead at the bottom of the boat.

"Then I knew—I know not how—what fearsome thing it was that lay in the dark waters! I seemed to feel two cold arms rise up and lay an icy grip on my heart till it stopped beating.

"The boat swung slowly round, and I found myself face to face with It—IT—that awful It—that had been Frank—my boyhood's friend.

"I knew no more. I learnt afterwards that two boats full of Indians happened to be passing, and one of them rowed our boat home with its two insensible occupants, the others took charge of the body of my friend.

"When I came to myself, I forced my way into the room where Margaret lay, stricken down anew by the terrible sight, and I told her with wild, raving words, for the fever was already in my blood, that I had killed Frank West—killed him for love of her—I know not if she believed me, for it was the beginning of an attack of brain fever, through which kind neighbours nursed me well; but I felt the curse of Cain was upon me, and



"THE BOAT SWUNG SLOWLY ROUND, AND I FOUND MYSELF FACE TO FACE WITH IT"

almost before I had fairly recovered I stole away secretly in my canoe and made my way here, where I have lived for nearly two years, seeing no one but an occasional traveller and an Indian whose services I required in building my house and procuring my provisions from a distant town. This clearing that you see was the wildest forest, with giant trees that it took months of hardest toil to hew down, and in fighting and wrestling with Nature, I have gained some measure of peace, while God only knows how bitterly I have repented of that moment's sin. But the ghost of the Dead Past haunts me even here. Hark!' And once again that weird, strange cry rang through the forest. 'It is Frank's voice calling me—I hear it as I sit in the twilight—as I lie on my bed in the dark night—shall I always hear it until we meet before the Great White Throne, and I ask him to forgive me?' He paused, while I, strangely moved by his sad story, hardly knew how to break the silence. Yet I had a word of comfort for him.

"'You are Charlie Galton,' I said,

'and your friends at the Bay mourn for you as lost. I was there last week, and heard the outline of the story you have filled in. Heard too, that you were entirely mistaken in believing yourself the unhappy cause of your friend's death. The cry you heard could not by any possibility have been his, for they tracked his way from the place he left you, to the spot where, deceived by the fog, he had walked into the river. He took a wrong turn almost immediately and must have been miles distant at the time you heard the cry which, like those we have heard to-night, was doubtless that of the night-owl.'

"'Is this true? You are not deceiving me?' he cried, seizing my hand and wringing it in an iron grasp.

"'I am not, indeed; come back with me and hear for yourself!' I replied.

"But he had sunk down on his knees, his frame shaking with convulsive sobs, as he cried:

"'My God! I thank Thee. Thou—Thou only hast delivered me from blood-guiltiness! The curse is removed! I am free!'

"I stole quietly into the inner room, and left him alone. When I returned he was calmer, but when I again begged him to go with me, he only shook his head, saying :

"No, no! I have lived too long alone. I do not feel that I could meet them all yet, but you will tell them of me. You have done me the greatest service that it is possible for one man to do another. You have removed an intolerable load from my heart, and I believe it was no

mere chance that guided you to my door.'

* * * *

"I have never seen or heard of Charlie Galton since that night, but when I told his story at the Bay, his old friend Alec McKay at once declared his intention of taking up land and settling near him and more than one young fellow expressed his willingness to join them, so I am not without hope that happier days are in store for him."





KNELLER HALL

Our Military School of Music

WRITTEN BY COLONEL E. MITCHELL, R.E., RETIRED.

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS.



HIS long, and justly celebrated Military School of Music, is no new school. It has been over forty years in existence, an outcome of a curious episode of the Crimean War.

During the "forty years peace," between Waterloo and the Crimea, military music had been brought to a good deal of perfection in the different regiments in the Service, by the liberal aid of foreign bandmasters. Of course, during those days, we were at peace with the world; but when war broke out, and the regiments, accompanied by their bands, embarked for active service, the foreign bandmasters, like certain personages of Bible fame, "began with one consent to make excuse." These foreign gentlemen objected to become targets for the Russians, and even those who were

willing to accompany their regiments, in the case of Germans and other subjects of a *Neutral State*, could not be permitted to do so for diplomatic reasons.

At all events, the matter was set at rest by the decision of the then Government, on the grounds of public policy, that bandmasters in the British Army should not only be specially trained on one uniform system, but that they should also be British subjects, enlist in the army, and thus become subject to the provisions of the Military Act and Articles of War, now I believe merged into the "Army Discipline Act." The illustrations, kindly supplied by Colonel Glennie, the Commandant of Kneller Hall, and his predecessor, Colonel Shaw Hellier, show a front view of Kneller Hall and a view of the Barrack Gate

and Stables, the latter being the original stables of Sir Godfrey Kneller.

This school is situated at Kneller Hall, which was purchased by Government about 1848, who has since continued to be its proud and fortunate possessor.

Kneller Hall still retains its original name, derived from its once owner, Sir Godfrey Kneller, the well-known and celebrated Painter to the Court of Charles II. The original building no longer exists, but an old foundation stone, bearing date 1709, still occupies an honoured and a conspicuous position at Kneller. The Hall is situated in the country, in the neighbourhood of Hounslow, Twickenham, and Rich-

neighbourhood of the Thames, were considered to be powerful factors. Anyhow, whatever were the motives, this School of Music has turned out to be a marked success. When Kneller Hall was utilised as a training school for Government schoolmasters, between 1848 and 1857, though under the patronage and direction of Dr. Temple, the late Bishop of London, and now Archbishop of Canterbury, there was, for some reason which I know not, a marked *want* of success.

There are generally about 205 pupils going through the special course of training to qualify them for holding the important positions of regimental band-



BRIDGE TO ISLAND

mond. It was a convenient situation for the Court Painter, because most of the fascinating young ladies, (the Court Beauties) whom his unique brush has handed down to modern days, resided at Hampton Court Palace, which is within convenient distance. Possibly, when it was selected for the Military School of Music (about 1857), the genial influence of the country surroundings, and its distance from towns, with their manifold temptations, and its healthy situation, rural scenery, and the

masters in the Royal Horse Artillery, and Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, the Household Troops, Cavalry, Infantry, etc.

Very wisely, short service soldier pupils are *not* eligible, and only those are admitted who have a good elementary knowledge of, and taste for music. Each regiment in the Service sends up one or two annually, the soldier pupils being selected with due regard to their habits, character, and general ability in music, so as far as possible in after years



END OF LAKE, SHOWING CEDAR TREE

to become a credit to the School, and indirectly to defray the expense of their two years' musical education.

The general round of the week-day education is thus mapped out, and strictly followed:—

At 6 o'clock, the students rise and dress themselves.

Then downstairs quietly trot,
And some they learn their lessons well
And some they catch it hot.

At 6.30 o'clock there is generally parade for drill or inspection of kit, and at 7.30 o'clock all sit down to a good breakfast.

A special musical table of instruction specifies exactly how the morning hours are to be occupied, and about two hours are taken up by dinner and recreation. Then music, according to an afternoon musical time table, goes on during the afternoon, but all comes to an end about 6 o'clock, and by 6.30 o'clock the instruments are "put to bed" till the next

morning. An hour is occupied each afternoon by tea and recreation, and lights and fires are extinguished from 10 o'clock to 10.15 o'clock, by which time all have gone to bed.

One special principle pervades instruction in the use of military musical instruments; viz.—"that the bands, drums, bugles or fifes, or what not, when playing or sounding for military purposes, should closely adhere to the time, *within the minute*, of the exact number of steps prescribed in the field exercise. Of course in the case of the cavalry bands, the time of the music should correspond to the usual action or time of trained horses at the regulation paces laid down for "the trot and canter."

To gain the coveted post of a band-master, the student must be able to play upon all band instruments, and these are many and various. For instance, there are the French horn, the clarionet, flute, cornet, trombone, bassoon, and

big and little drums, etc. They must also be able to teach pupils the proper way to finger and perform on these instruments.

Students and pupils are probationers for the *first six months* of the Kneller Hall course, and if they qualify themselves by misconduct, etc., the Commandant has the practical power of causing them to be deported back to their regiments, but there rarely arises a necessity for this.

Some years ago a certain smart band boy nearly qualified himself, by forgetting that some *apples* in some of the neighbouring orchards were not common property, and the Commandant warned him if he *again* meddled with other people's apples, he would be sent back to his regiment.

Unfortunately, the temptation of ripe strawberries was too great, and the lad was once more before the Commandant, who reminded him of his previous bad doings, and invited him to show cause why he should not be now sent back to his regiment.

"Please sir," responded the delinquent, "you said I should be sent back to my regiment if I took any more apples, and I ain't done so, I only took strawberries."

"All right," replied the Commandant, "you shall not go this time back to your regiment," adding "Sergeant-Major, see that boy gets a dozen strokes with the birch-rod."

"Yes, sir," said the Sergeant-Major, saluting, and to the boy, "To the right turn, right wheel, quick march."

What exactly happened to, shall we say Master Tom, while in custody of the Sergeant-Major, was never, I believe, disclosed, but divers howls were heard to proceed with healthy vigour from the Sergeant-Major's quarters, and Tom did not appear in public next day, and when he did, he seemed to walk and sit somewhat uneasily.

A good many professors of music attend daily to give the necessary instruction in all branches of music—harmony, counterpoint, scoring, and the duties of pupil teachers of music.

The Hall library is a very good one, containing standard works on music by Bannister, Reicha, Cherubini,

Logier, Dr. Stainer, and other well-known writers on Music. I am told the various classes' studies on harmony and counterpoint are based on the instruction given in the writings and works of Sir F. Gore Ouseley of Oxford, and E. F. Richter of Leipsic.

The Kneller Hall band is famed. The Press inserts public notice when it will play in the grounds of the Hall. It usually does so (rainy days excepted) on *all* Wednesdays from April to October included.

The final six months' students and pupils form the band, and the public throng into the grounds, where they find a "chair contractor," who hires out seats, including the "musical programme," for 1d. each. The scenic beauty of the grounds on fine days attracts many visitors, especially in the spring and early summer, when the gentle progression and growth of trees, flowers and shrubs, when the sky is blue and the sun shines brightly, and the breezes floating across the lawns and flower-beds, alike charm the eyes and captivate the senses.

The writer and many friends have spent numerous, and let us hope profitable afternoons, on the band days at Kneller Hall, when that excellent and hospitable Commandant, Colonel Shaw Hellier, late 4th Dragoon Guards, one of the best musicians in England, ruled there, but only, under new and enforced age rules, for five years. But he ruled long enough to elevate the character of all under his command, and modified the admirable system, which his able predecessor had left, with such alterations as experience proved to be desirable.

Some of the boys come from the Royal Military Asylum at Chelsea, and the Royal Hibernian Military School, if they are able to produce, on entering, a fourth-class certificate in education. Suitable provisions for married students living with their wives have been made privately by the excellent lodgings they can secure in the adjacent villages.

There is a large dining hall utilised for musical instruction in wet and cold weather. In fine weather most of the eating of meals and music lessons are carried on under the shade of the white

and pink Kneller chestnut trees. There are so seldom any on "the sick list," that no hospital accommodation has been provided, and there are also no punishment cells. On the rare occasions that the Commandant has to dispense that sort of punishment, the offender affords "a dissolving view" of himself and an escort to the cells in Hounslow Barracks, about two miles distant, and invariably eventually returns a wiser youth.

The great and increasing demand for bandmasters is fully equalled by the

supply, indeed the number of certified musicians who pass through the portals of Kneller Hall could be increased were there accommodation for them. For some time competent pupils have not occasionally been able to enter for that reason—a hardship in several ways, equally so with the system that is in force at Woolwich and Sandhurst, where the unlimited open competition, objectionable in many respects, frequently excludes, with loss to the public service, many well-qualified young men.

The recreation room, library, and bil-

liard room are much appreciated. Inside the grounds, and as part of the Hall, is the small church, a "gem of church architecture," in which on Sundays Colonel Shaw Hellier always presided at the organ. By a clever utilisation of a vacant space he added at his own expense about forty seats at the end of the gallery, where the choir usually sit. The church services are hearty, and though marriages and baptisms are not celebrated there, within its walls, where the dim religious light is cast by the stained glass windows, there is rarely a vacant seat during divine service, as the public, who come on the chance (from far and wide), are admitted when the students and pupils have taken their places.



THE CHAPEL



A QUIET STREAM

The Finest River Scenery in England

WRITTEN BY C. PARKINSON. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS.

IT was in the year 1771 that the poet Gray, in a letter to his friend, Dr. Wharton, described the banks of the Wye between Ross and Chepstow as "a succession of nameless beauties," and few, I think, will venture to dispute his words; in fact, the lower part is here boldly designated as the finest river scenery in England. The strange thing is that it is not more generally known and explored both by those at home and our American visitors, despite the facile communications with the outer world.

Far away, amid the mountain fastnesses of Plinlimmon, and not far distant from the source of the Severn, the Wye rises at a spot called "the Rest on the Stones." Asphodels and sundews thrive on the saturated moorlands, ring ouzels congregate, and the short-eared

owls flit silently by day amongst the heather in search of the small game they love so well. It is one of the wildest parts of Wales, where the little rills swell into great rivers, rolling onwards towards the sea. A sparkling brooklet at first, the incipient stream ripples and leaps vigorously amid the rocks towards Llangurig. There is an inn here, within touch of the Rhayader and Builth railway, which might well serve as the cyclist's starting-point for the tour of the Wye valley, a distance of little more than 120 miles, with good roads throughout, until Chepstow is finally reached. Above Hereford the river is not navigable, and even the lower Wye lacks the splendid waterway of the Thames. At Llangurig the waters of the Bidno swell the main stream, and there are plenty of trout in

these parts for those who care for the characteristic spring fly-fishing in mountain brooks. Some ten miles lower down we approach the neighbourhood of Rhayader, justly famed for the Falls of the Wye, and the fairy glens situated amid scenery of the most romantic description. The Falls may be little more than salmon leaps, but the bold rocks and profuse vegetation constitute most alluring resorts, where we are brought face to face with the solitude of nature, and the eternal splash of the water has an irresistible fascination of its own. The Marteg and other tributaries increase the volume of the Wye, and the fisherman might find worse quarters than Rhayader or Builth at a season when the March browns and iron blues are on the water. Pedestrians, if so disposed, may strike a mountain path across the chain of hills to the ideal Welsh market town of Builth—a centre for endless excursions. Amongst the heather-clad hills we find droves of Welsh ponies at large; herds of shaggy black cattle, small in size, with long horns and fierce expression, though in reality most docile creatures; and the agile sheep that skip nimbly amid the crags like Alpine goats. The latter are most hardy by nature, and we may find the rough excavations they make as a protection for themselves in the hillside against the cruel winds and snows of winter time. The alternative route by the valley lies *viâ* Newbridge and the junction of the wild Ithon, where the rock scenery is of the finest, and the trout fishing of the best kind.

Builth itself is typically Welsh, with its neat whitewashed houses, animated market, and picturesque situation upon the plain, encircled with mountainous hills. This upper portion of the Wye, if slightly inaccessible, is, in reality, easily approached *viâ* Hereford and Craven Arms, or Three Cocks junction, in connection with the North Western Railway. When the water is fairly high it is quite possible for a canoe to pass downwards all the way to Chepstow, hindered only by the owners—sometimes tenacious of their salmon-fishing rights; for the river is not a free waterway above Hereford. But even where a man is thus challenged he can

carry his light burden across a few fields in order to regain the stream lower down. Passing through a beautiful district known as Wyese towards Boughrood Castle, Glasbury and Hay, the country becomes less wild and more pastoral in character, with a splendid expanse of green hills, hanging woods, and rich meadows. An excellent road from Three Cocks junction passes through this part of the Wye valley, *viâ* Witney and Boughrood. Sometimes the river is lost between the deep red banks and woodlands; or, again, the stream wanders peacefully through green pastures essentially English in character. In the neighbourhood of Hay, Clifford Castle stands boldly on a terrace overlooking the river. It was a Norman stronghold, founded by Fitz-Osborne, Earl of Huntingdon, and is, moreover, said to have been the birth-place of Amy Robsart. The river passes into England at a place called Rhydspence. Offa's Dyke, that great Saxon rampart which defended the Welsh border from the Dee to the Severn estuary, can be traced at Byford, in the same locality as the remains of the old Roman encampment at Kenchester. And then we approach the quiet old Cathedral City of Hereford. The river scenery between Hereford and Ross is tame in comparison with the upper and lower parts of the Wye, although it is pleasant enough rowing down stream by Holme Lacy and Fawley woods. Near to the former place the Lug, another well-known trout river, joins the Wye, and the salmon fishing close at hand is not to be despised. Less than a year ago an angler landed a fish of considerably more than twenty pounds on the bank at Holme Lacy, without a gaff or any other assistance, a proof that all the salmon are not netted in the estuary or lower reaches of the river.

From Hereford to Symonds Yat, that is, to the really grand part of the Wye, the distance is forty-four miles by water. It can easily be covered by a party—say in a Canadian birch-bark canoe—in the day. From Ross to Symonds Yat, a boat drawing nine inches can be rowed in three hours, passing Goodrich Castle, Kerne Bridge, and English Bicknor; and thence beneath the magnificent

cliffs, clad with ivy and a most profuse vegetation, known as the Coldwell Rocks, with the Yat as a culminating point of natural beauty. Goodrich Castle is well worth a visit, not only for its fine situation, but also for the Norman keep, without a rival in the country, save that of West Malling, in Kent. A great deal of the picturesque ruin is evidently of the Edwardian period, if we may judge from the pointed windows, the groinings of the chapel, and the remains of the banquet-

opposite bank. The safe rule is to follow the course of the stream, and to avoid the dense masses of floating weed—the beautiful water crowfoot, which, in places, almost hides the water. The Coldwell rocks are superb walls of solid limestone, which, before Monmouth is reached, attain a height of 400 feet, rising perpendicularly from the river. The Forest of Dean extends practically to the banks of the Wye, and these woodlands lend a most charming aspect to the landscape. The word *Yat* signi-



THE FERRY, SYMONDS YAT

hall. How the ditch was flooded it is not easy to ascertain, but the drawbridge and portcullis are still indicated, with a curiously contrived sally-port on the opposite side of the castle. There are numerous rapids created by sunken rocks between Lydbrook and Kerne Bridge, the circuitous course of the stream requiring very careful watching by oarsmen. There is little danger if a sharp eye is kept on the head of water passing through the deeper channel, sometimes on one side of the river, and sometimes sweeping across beneath the

fies a gate, or barrier, a fact which we quickly realise when the extraordinary horseshoe bend in the river, due to the mass of limestone cliff on the one side of the stream, is observed. The Wye is forced to double back upon itself by the solid barrier, and hence we have all the romantic beauty created for us at Symonds Yat. Fresh vistas are unfolded at every bend, until the broad sweep of green hills away to the right, dotted with white houses on the slopes of the Great and Little Doward complete a most sublime view. On the one

side the cliffs are a mass of ivy, gnarled yews growing from the fissures of the rock, white beam trees, which reflect a silvery light, and a profuse low-growing vegetation, with oak forest above. On the opposite bank the foreground is a blaze of golden gorse, with glades of bracken, and the ridge crowned with purple heather. As Gray remarks, we pass through scenes of nameless beauties in bewildering succession. Those who have the necessary time will do well to leave the river at Lydbrook (or the train, if travelling from Ross) in order to walk over the Coldwell cliffs to Symonds Yat, a distance of some three miles only. A footpath leads through the woods, where spaces are cleared here and there at points of special vantage, for the enjoyment of the magnificent views of the river below. With a sheer precipice at our feet, somewhat hidden it may be stated by the bushes, we gaze spell-bound at the scene. These rock-girt woods are wonderfully prolific with several of the more delicate-flavoured edible fungi; amongst others we have found the chanterelle, the

morel, the edible hydnum, and many less generally recognised as esculent dainties, and singularly neglected in English culinary art.

Those who journey to Symonds Yat from Ross by boat usually land outside the barrier of limestone cliff, leaving the boatman to bring the craft round the four-mile bend of the river. The intervening neck of land is little more than half-a-mile across, with a steep ascent to the plateau of the Yat, and an equally sharp descent on the other side. As we regain the valley, the Wye scenery is at its best, the precipitous crags appearing only here and there amid the rich woodlands which clothe the banks. The village of Whitchurch lies a mile away, but there are hotels and a few lodging-houses close at hand, where a fortnight may be delightfully spent in leafy June amid all the wealth of the fresh foliage. The Forest of Dean occupies that country which lies between the Severn and the Wye. In the olden days the "wooden walls" of England were largely constructed from the oaks grown on the Crown lands of Dean



A BEND OF THE RIVER FROM THE CLIFFS

Forest; hence the timber acreage has been largely curtailed, although the woods are still ample, with enticing green drives which extend in every direction. We may penetrate into the very heart of the forest to the Speech-house, or explore another route, by a steady climb, to Staunton and the Druidic Buckstone, or Logan stone, which, for safety, has been cemented to its base. The woodland excursions, in fact, from Symonds Yat are endless, and we have seen baskets of wild orchids obtained in these parts, inclusive of the bee, the fly, the creamy butterfly, bird's nest, pyramid, white helleborine, and the commoner meadow species, that would almost vie with some of exotic growth for colour and beauty, if smaller in size than tropical kinds.

We have spent the greater part of a brilliant summer's night smearing the tree trunks in one of these green drives to attract the rarer kinds of nocturnal moths to the sweet fluid that they appreciate so well. The flash of a lantern reveals the insects sipping the nectar by means of the long proboscis, and a wonderful greenish light is reflected from the numberless facets of the eyes, with a brilliance that is almost phosphoric. The night-jars flit silently round our heads, and the owls shriek as if murder were being committed in the rock-bound thickets. The salmon leap in the river below with a terrific splash, and we feel like guilty poachers stealing through the glades in the stillness of night.

The six miles of river between Symonds Yat and Monmouth passes through a deep gorge in the horizontally stratified limestones, with sharp turns in the stream every mile or so. It is quite an excitement to shoot the rapids to the left of the islet at Symonds Yat, and those inexperienced in making the passage will probably ship water in the broken stream, even if they have the luck to escape the sunken rocks. In these parts fishermen are at work in their wicker coracles, throwing a fly with one hand as they scull with the other. Presently one of them lands, places the coracle over his head, and marches away into the hidden depths of the woods beyond, for all the world like an ancient Briton in the days of Saxon

England. Traces of ancient races, indeed, exist on every side. Tumuli crown the hills on the Monmouthshire side of the river, and distinct evidences of Roman smelting works are found everywhere. Ironstone was obtained through lateral shafts driven into the hills from a level slightly above the bed of the Wye. Furnaces were constructed in deep holes which still remain, wood having been used for fuel. The smelting process was of the rudest description, the ore being enveloped in clay. The slag, invariably retaining a large percentage of metal, has been extensively used in the West Midlands by the Romans, for the purpose of road-making. We have seen such material ten feet beneath the present surface excavated in the city of Worcester, which undoubtedly came from the Wye smeltings. The ferruginous springs in the limestone reveal the presence of iron oxides, and the stalactite caves, a mile below the Yat, are really disused iron workings. In the dead waters just at this bend, is a favourite salmon pool, fully fifteen feet deep, with rapids both above and below. It is known as "Martin's Hole," and many a fine fish has been netted therein. There are splendid bathing pools close at hand, with abundant opportunities for the morning dip. We have the recollection of two ill-used ones vainly endeavouring to find their clothes after disporting themselves in the sparkling water. As one pathetically remarked: "It was not the loss of the clothes that troubled me; I was prepared to walk home artistically draped in a towel. It was the *spectacles* that I missed so much. I trod on a thistle in getting out of the water, and then wandered inadvertently into a bed of nettles." Trivial incidents are amply sufficient to cause amusement during holiday rambles, a time when grave city men behave themselves like great schoolboys let loose from all tasks. It happened that several of our best photographs—including the picture of the "Seven Sisters Rocks,"—were obtained at this place, due care being taken to eliminate these frolicsome water-nymphs at play.

The few miles between Symonds Yat and the quaint old town of Monmouth are certainly the finest part of the Wye,



THE SEVEN SISTERS ROCK

the wondrous effect of the varied foliage appealing forcibly to the artistic sense. The fresh leafage of early June is just in its prime; the grey limestones are half hidden by fantastic yews and the sombre evergreen foliage which affords the strong contrast to the tender verdure of the larches and young beech leaves, the wealth of wild cherry, and the peculiar lights due to the silvery white-beam trees. The best photographs, alas! fail to reveal such subtle gradations of colour-tone. Rare birds make a home in the thickets, and the silence is broken by their joyous chorus of song, or the swirl of the stream. The scene is so wild that one almost expects to find herds of wild deer at the water-brook, boars or wolves in the still glades. As late as the fourteenth century beavers flourished in the Western country. Living in the Wye valley, even in these days, it would be easy to train otters for fishing purposes, as they do in Radnorshire, and other parts of Wales.

Constant watchfulness is required in the guidance of a boat through the rapids which beset the river between the Yat and Tintern. About a mile above Monmouth there is an islet in mid-stream, with, apparently, an equal channel on either side. It is the safest course to steer through the troubled waters to the left; in fact, all boatmen pass this way in spite of shipping a little water. After passing the mouth of the

Monnow, where the picture of Rockfield Bridge was taken (a little way up the tributary river) and the Trothy—a famous trout stream—we find a succession of difficult channels at Redbrook, Landogo, and Bigsweir, the latter a disused weir with a fall of two feet or more, according to the volume of water in the Wye. Here the boat appears to be on the brow of a hill of water; suddenly she darts downward, the nose going underneath the stream, unless an exact course is steered. In some places a boat-hook is useful to keep her head straight. Monmouth is laden with historic memories, stamped with the stirring traditions of Henry of Agincourt, and architecturally interesting on account of its churches, houses, and venerable bridge. This ancient structure across the Monnow, with a gate-house on the very bridge itself, is probably unique in Great Britain. Monmouth is a convenient halting place, most picturesquely situated amid an amphitheatre of splendid hills. No visitor should leave Monmouth without making the small *detour* by rail, or road, to the finely preserved ruins of Raglan Castle. It is true that the structure cannot rival in antiquity the castles of Norman or Edwardian date; it has, on the other hand, an importance of its own as a well-nigh perfect specimen of the later mediæval fortress-castle, associated historically with the Civil War and the celebrated

Marquis of Worcester—claimed by some to have first applied steam as a motive power. There is no better guide to this grand pile than Dr. MacDonald's novel, entitled: "St. George and St. Michael," which deals chiefly with the famous siege of Raglan. The accompanying photograph serves to give a glimpse at the interior courtyard, with the remains of the baronial hall, some few details of the ornamental architecture, and the effect of picturesque decay which is so generally attractive in these lingering

there are many places of interest by the way, notably the remains of the Norman stronghold of St. Briavels, a castle lying on the high ground above Bigsweir. Somewhat fallen from its greatness, the rugged old building of red sandstone still retains many features of architectural interest. It was erected in the reign of Henry I., and the warder or constable for the time being also exercised control over the adjacent Forest of Dean. The double tower of the gateway is still inhabited, the remainder of



ROCKFIELD BRIDGE

remains of other ages. To stroll on the velvet turf of the bowling-green, and gaze at the ivy-clad walls and irregular pile of buildings, is to be transported in spirit three hundred years back in history, and to lose touch for the moment of the whirl and bustle of every-day life. We are unable here to give a view of the stately entrance flanked by solid towers, the whole castle having an admirable position on the brow of a slight eminence above the plain.

As we descend the Wye from Monmouth to the lovely vale of Tintern,

the castle having fallen into decay. The solid thickness of the walls and the huge open chimney are noticeable, together with a real dog-wheel, inside which the animals ran in order to turn the spit. Traces of the moat also remain, although houses have been built close to the edge, all water being long since drained away. The stronghold, in short, is shorn of all its greatness. From St. Briavels there is a pleasant walk of some ten miles through the best part of Dean Forest, an expedition open to those who can tear themselves away

from the exquisite scenery of the Wye valley. The whole of that country which lies between the Severn and the Wye is wonderfully fine, disfigured only in the region of the Cinderford collieries and iron works. The most charming sylvan scenery surrounds the pits, and the beech avenues near Coleford are superb. Continuing the river course, the character of the surroundings change somewhat. The narrow defiles, bordered by sheer precipices and dense woodlands, give place to a more open country. At Landogo, for example, the wide expanse of green hill is more suggestive of the lower slopes of the Swiss Jura Mountains in the vicinity of Neuchatel.

The want of a sufficient depth of water for boating purposes is evident in the shallow rapids immediately above Tintern. Being within the influence of the tide, there is plenty of water at certain times during the day, but at low water and in dry seasons passengers sometimes have to be landed before the boats can pass through the broken waters. On one occasion we ran our bows hard on a shoal with a somewhat amusing result. A goodnatured friend stepped on to the islet in order to free the craft by pushing her head into the proper channel. The purpose was duly accomplished, but it was impossible for him to re-enter the boat before she had darted away in swift race, leaving a

passenger unintentionally stranded in mid-stream. The boat could not return against such a force of water, so nothing remained but to wade either to the right or left bank, people shouting directions to him meanwhile from the shore, which were utterly lost in the roar of the stream. There was not sufficient depth to swim, neither could a foothold be maintained amongst the slippery stones of the river bed. Twice our friend failed in an attempt to reach the shore, risking his life on each occasion; in the end an ignominious escape was effected by means of a flat-bottomed salmon boat. "Oh, yes," one of the country folk observed, by way of consolation, "several have been drowned at that place." This is simply an illustration of the fact that the whole of the lower Wye demands care in navigation.

The placid vale of Tintern, with the glorious early English ruin nestling deep amid the hills, creates a longing for the secluded life of the mediæval monk, secure from the burden of a too busy world. Wandering through the roofless nave, where velvet grass has taken the place of stone pavements, another glimpse is obtained of past ages, and we can almost enter into the spirit of the monastic days, when such institutions were the centre and precious storehouse of all culture and learning. With the possible exception of Fountains Abbey, in Yorkshire, Tintern stands

unrivalled in England for its noble proportions and perfection of style; no words can do justice to the rare beauty of the surroundings. A ridge of Scotch firs, visible as a landmark from the distant vale of the Severn and the Cotswold Hills, crowns the famous Windcliff, above Tintern. The view from the height embraces seven counties, a most entrancing panorama on a clear day. A path descends the face of the cliff, through the woods to Moss



RAGLAN CASTLE

Cottage, and thence into Piercefield Park, which practically flanks the Wye as far as Chepstow, a truly delightful situation for a gentleman's country seat. With great liberality this domain is open to public inspection.

Chepstow, with its fine old castle and hideous railway bridge—due to the genius of Brunel—occupies a semi-circular position following the natural curve of the river. The cramped situation of the castle on a limestone plateau accounts for the curious pentagonal ground-plan of the edifice. The outer walls and bastions include the keep and the main portions of the stronghold, together with the remains of a beautiful Early English chapel, divided from the other parts by a deep cleft in the solid rock, and approached by a connecting bridge. Cromwell in person directed an unsuccessful attack on Chepstow, the garrison being eventually starved out after several futile assaults had been delivered on the impregnable river side. The ivy-grown walls are a favourite haunt of the holly-blue butterfly, which may sometimes be seen in hundreds on a sunny day during the third week in April, when they emerge fresh from the *pupa* in brilliant attire.

The tide at Chepstow is one of the highest in the world, occasionally showing a rise of fifty feet. This is exceeded by the tide in the Bay of Fundy, at St. Malo, and possibly at one place in China. Those who are interested in the salmon fisheries will find it worth while to go down in one of the flat-bottomed boats on the ebb to Beachley Point, a distance of three miles, to witness the peculiar stop-net fishing, which is adopted in the estuary. The boat is moored to stakes in the river, broadside on to the tide. A pocket-shaped net is extended on a V frame, with an opening some thirty feet across, gradually diminishing into a bag. The extremity passes beneath the boat and is held in position by a rope in the fishermen's hands. The salmon, travelling fast in the murky flood, bolts headlong into the net, a violent twitching revealing its presence. The pocket is hauled up, and perhaps a 20-lb. fish

lies therein. A knowledge of the tides is indispensable, for a boat is easily capsized on the 12-knot flood; and there is no help for a man who is once thrown into the surging waters. Across the salt marshes at Beachley there are exceedingly curious atmospheric effects. On a hot summer's day we seem to be outside the material world. The vessels sailing away on the horizon appear rather in the clouds than on the surface of the water. Objects are distorted by mirage, and a row of poplars in the distance appear more by reflection—inverted in the still river—than in their real position. Everything becomes indefinite, and we are driven to ask whether matter is existent, or if two worlds co-exist within the same dimensions.

Opposite to Beachley—across the Severn—lies Aust Cliff where the old Roman causeway and ford can still be traced, a sort of paved way in the river bed. Until the period of railways and high-level bridges, the Aust crossing was the main route from Bristol and Devonshire into the English border counties; horses, carriages, and passengers alike, being ferried across the estuary mouth. Now, however, times have changed. There is the lofty Severn bridge a few miles higher up the river, and the four-mile tunnel at Portskewet to connect Bristol and South Wales by railway. The ferry has fallen into disuse.

As we bid farewell to the exquisite environment of the Wye, there remains one item for comment. In the last week of October, or the first week in November, according to the season, the walk of eight miles from Lydbrook Junction to Monmouth, reveals a gorgeous succession of Autumn colours, that, in proportion to the limitations of the landscape, cannot be surpassed by the resplendent crimson, scarlet and gold of the American sumachs and the Canadian maples. There is not the boundless extent of colouration, but the quality is superlative, heightened in contrast with the more sombre evergreens and the grey tones of the lofty crags.



WRITTEN BY RANGER GULL AND REGINALD BACCHUS. ILLUSTRATED BY
Y. A. D. LLUELLYN

MR. FLORIMOND awoke from a deep sleep. There was nobody there but the dog Trust. Mr. Florimond objected to the dog Trust's friendships for strange dogs in the street, and after having cautioned him severely was compelled to confine him to the house and the little garden at the back. The dog Trust, being deprived of proper exercise, had in consequence become very fat and lazy, and indeed would often sleep far on into a delightful summer's day.

Mr. Florimond looked gloomily round the neat and pretty bedroom, which afforded such a contrast to its dishevelled owner. Since he had taken to drink, Mr. Florimond had become more and more careless of his nails and hair, and although his complexion was distinctly yellow, he had lately allowed himself to wear a green nightcap, which was very ugly indeed. In the saucer of the candlestick which stood by the bedside

were some lumps of sugar and a little round bottle of purple liquid. Mr. Florimond poured two or three drops of the liquid on to a piece of sugar and swallowed it with great satisfaction. The little bottle held toothache mixture, and Mr. Florimond had discovered, by the merest chance, that if you drank a little of this stuff it would supply a feeble exhilaration to flagging powers, and even on good days would make one hungry enough at breakfast time to call hurriedly for an egg.

In a few moments Mr. Florimond climbed out of bed and gave a vicious kick to the dog Trust. Hastily, avoiding his bath, he thrust his feet into a pair of Turkish slippers, which he had bought for a mere ditty in the Lowther Arcade, and then wrapping himself in a dressing gown, sulkily went downstairs to breakfast. His little breakfast room, with its French windows opening out into the garden, presented a curious appearance to the eyes of any one who understood

about rooms. It was obviously going through a period of change. Originally, one saw that it had been exactly the kind of breakfast room that one expects to find in Tulse Hill. On the right-hand side of the hall, as you enter, there was, naturally enough, the engraving of King Charles I. saying goodbye to his children; nor was one disappointed when one looked for the ebonised chess table with the squares made of inlaid mother-of-pearl. What, however, was curious, was the fact that the experiment had been made of covering one wall entirely with brown paper, and that the only picture on this space was a black and white drawing by a notorious decadent artist. This picture was carefully hung so that it should not be in the centre of the wall. Moreover, a roll of white paper, which was leaning against the nicely glazed mahogany bookshelf

full of standard works, looked suspiciously like a poster by Lautrec. A copy of *Gil Blas Illustré* lay upon the sofa, but half concealing the familiar covers of Cassell's useful and popular dictionary of the French language. Mr. Florimond, who was very hungry indeed, rang the bell for breakfast; but when Buscall brought up a dish of hot and tempting sausages, he waved her impatiently away, and in a low weary voice asked for some dry toast. In fact, Mr. Florimond was in a very bad way, and saw nothing but ruin staring him in the face. As he thought over his sad condition his eyes grew moist with self pity, and the hand that poured out a brandy and soda shook like a water-eaten leaf.

His situation was certainly unenviable. Mr. Florimond was a novelist of the romantic school, and by regular hours—from ten to two, and from eight to eleven



"IN A LOW, WEARY VOICE, HE ASKED FOR SOME DRY TOAST."

—and untiring industry had managed to make a comfortable though moderate income. His stories, which invariably began with the sentence "Two horsemen came galloping over the plain," were read with great interest by many serious-minded people at Ipswich and other country towns, and until six months ago he had been in full enjoyment of that happiness which the love and esteem of the respectable alone can give.

The trouble that now confronted him was real and earnest, for it was nothing less than an entire change of the public taste, and an insistent demand for a kind of literature which, despite his hardest efforts, Mr. Florimond found himself quite unable to supply. A year or so before, there had arisen in Oxford and Paris a band of young men of great brilliancy and few morals, under the leadership of a respectable middle-aged gentleman, who had spent several years of his life in stifling his strong domestic impulses, and in endeavouring to be very wicked indeed. Whenever any of the little band had invented, or borrowed from some ancient Latin book, a fresh form of vicious indulgence—some new and very intoxicating drink, or something delightfully naughty to say—they at once printed the discovery in a newspaper, and so in quite a short time became very famous. Had these ingenuous people been content to simply live their amusing lives and provide a little harmless merriment for real people, Mr. Florimond would never have complained; but it was not so.

Urged on by the pathetic spectacle of the respectable middle-aged gentleman, whose views endeavoured to be as broad as his margins, these young men from Oxford devoted their time to the making of books, which immediately had an enormous and incredible success. Mr. Florimond, who rarely left the chaste seclusion of Tulse Hill, did not know enough of the affairs of the world to understand that the public were only amused for a little space at the merry antics of these curious people, and would inevitably return to the real and solid romances which he himself was able to produce.

He saw that one touch of indecency makes the whole world grin, but was not

astute enough to analyse the quality of the smile.

His sales fell off very much, and his publishers, though they issued his new book, "Sword and Sorcerer," hinted that something a trifle more modern would be more likely to suit the public taste and suggested that the epigram was at the moment a form of expression worthy his attention.

Mr. Florimond quite saw the force of their remarks, and when, on picking up the lucubrations of many of his brethren of the sword and spear, he saw that royalties had made decadents of them all, he determined that he also would become what in a feeble attempt at a pun he called a "decayed 'un."

He found it very difficult because he did not understand the *flair* of the movement in the least. He was by no means a fool, but his type of brain was one which found it impossible to assimilate the new ideas. He could not see the *raison d'être* of the whole thing, and his attempts were very pitiable. This morning he gloomily surveyed a piece of paper which bore the whole output of the day before. It was headed "Fantasia," and ran:—

"Strange to be tipsy yesterday, to dress myself up thus and knock at the gate of the palace and say, 'I would be the King's new jester.' Upon my life, folly has better ideas than reason: to be accepted, to be given a palace to roam in, a King to fool to, and to be given a new personality—this is charming.

"And they are all so kind too—they forget me—I met the King. His courtiers told him: 'St. Grau is dead, here is a counterfeit.' He hadn't even the curiosity to look at me. He murmured something about the bells being in the same tone, so I had to cut off all mine and sew on new ones."

Mr. Florimond had tried very hard over this. He had been intoxicated as early as twelve o'clock in the morning on a mixture of bay rum and the green part of a Gorgonzola cheese, and in the afternoon he had chatted for half-an-hour with a man who had once spoken to Verlaine. This was all the result! He shook his head gloomily, for he knew that it would not do. No readers, he

reflected, would stand that, and he marvelled how the type of young man he heard of succeeded, by being nearly always idle in a public, in becoming the idol of the public. During the last few days he had returned time after time, like the dog of Scripture, to the decadent novel he was engaged on, and on each occasion the thing had bitterly repulsed him. His balance at the bank was getting alarmingly low, and the future presented nothing but blackness to his imagination. Often for hours he would stare gloomily at the fire, wondering how the new writers made the epigrams that were so liberally scattered over their pages. He could not get the trick of it, try as he would. He would write down a proverb such as "The early bird gets the first worm," and hours of anguish would only twist it into "The surly word makes the curst squirm," or some equally futile imitation of the real thing.

This morning he was more than usually unhappy, and after an aimless opium-tainted cigarette which he did not enjoy, resolved to take a walk in the neighbourhood, in the hope that the fresh air might stimulate his intelligence. Accordingly he dressed and shaved, feeling much better for the cleanly operation, and summoning the dog Trust went out into the crisp and invigorating winter's morning. The dog Trust, delighted at this unwonted freedom, ran hurriedly down the garden path. Unfortunately, as he emerged from the gate, the dog Trust collided violently with a neatly-dressed young gentleman who was walking past, and the ground being very slippery, the young gentleman fell with great violence, striking his head against the kerbstone. Mr. Florimond, in whom the new theories had not yet entirely stifled every kindly impulse, immediately ran to his assistance, and finding him rather badly hurt, called Buscall, the cook, and with her help, carried him into the house.

The young gentleman was dressed with great elegance and in a thoroughly considered manner. His face was pale and thin, and his light straw-coloured hair was parted very neatly in the centre and anointed with fragrant brilliantine. Instead of an ordinary tie, he wore an old-fashioned stock, which swathed his

tall collar in its many folds, and from the left-hand pocket of his waistcoat dangled a little bunch of seals. While Buscall was bathing his injured head with warm water, Mr. Florimond regarded him with great interest. Some indefinable instinct told him that the stranger must be a real decadent, and though he knew the folly of indulging in such vain hopes, the joyous conviction was more and more borne in upon him as he watched the pallid figure on the sofa. After a few minutes, the young gentleman sighed, and, opening his eyes, regarded good Buscall, who was making a linen bandage, with obvious interest.

"I hope you are better, sir," said Mr. Florimond; "you have had a nasty knock, and I fear it was entirely owing to the lamentable clumsiness of the dog Trust, who is often very rough in the morning, and whom I shall whip severely."

"Oh, please do not mention it," answered the young gentleman; "the sensation was quite novel and delightful, and I must really insist you will not punish the dog Trust on my account. Might I be so bold as to ask you for a drink?"

A brilliant idea occurred to Mr. Florimond—he would test the decadence of his guest. He hastily ran to the morning room and mixed a strong brandy and soda. Then he took the bottle of bay rum out of the cupboard, and, cutting a nice piece of Gorgonzola cheese from the greenest part, placed it upon a plate.

If the young gentleman was, as he hoped, a real decadent, Mr. Florimond knew that he would at once compound the famous drink, but if a more common person, he would immediately choose the brandy and soda. With hands trembling with suppressed excitement, he bore the tray into the next room. His doubts were at once set at rest. The young gentleman took the cheese and placed it in the tumbler without any surprise, and merely remarking that Mr. Florimond had forgotten the spoon, poured out a liberal allowance from the bottle of bay rum. Then, making a wry face, he tossed off the mixture, and, lying back on the sofa, regarded Mr. Florimond with a simple and contented smile.



"HE WROTE HIS NAME CARADOC MILNES"

The heart of the novelist beat rapidly, for he felt he was on the way to valuable discoveries, and the hopes fluttering at his heart whispered joyously that he was at last going to find out how it was done.

"I perceive, sir," he said reverentially, "that you are a decadent."

A bright and winning smile lit up the young gentleman's face.

"I am, I am," he replied, with a deprecating wave of his hand. "My name is Caradoc Milnes."

Mr. Florimond trembled all over with pleasure. Here was an opportunity indeed! Fate had thrown into his hands the very pearl of decadents. There before him, on the little rep sofa, lay Caradoc Milnes himself, the arch-epigrammatist of Town, and, as they said in Tulse Hill, the wickedest man in the world. Mr. Florimond bowed with great dignity.

"I am proud indeed," he murmured, "to offer my poor hospitality to Caradoc Milnes, and, myself a humble walker in literary paths, to welcome one of Literature's most distinguished sons."

The young gentleman was obviously very pleased by this speech of Mr. Florimond, for with an almost pathetic eagerness he said, "Yes, am I not splendid? It is most gratifying to find that even in Tulse Hill the natives appreciate me. I am sure you must be a most intelligent person, I must positively give you my autograph;" and, walking unsteadily to the wall, he took a pencil and wrote his name "Caradoc Milnes," upon it in large letters. When he had returned to the sofa, looking very young and fragile, he began to talk pleasantly about himself, and he told Mr. Florimond, who was intensely interested, many facts about what he ate and drank, and the cafés he sat about in when he was in Paris. It transpired during the conversation that Caradoc Milnes' new book of epigrams on large paper had sold to the extent of nearly fifteen thousand copies.

"And when, if I may be so bold as to ask," said Mr. Florimond, "is your next work to be issued?"

"Never," answered Mr. Milnes with a slight sigh. "I have said all that I have to say, and as my doctor tells me that I have ruined a constitution never originally strong, I sail next week for Dieppe, where I hope to end my days in a little house that I have in the Faubourg de la Barre. The medical people calculate that I have six, if not eight, months of life still before me, and I shall devote them to the investigation of a question that has often vexed me. I have not yet been able to discover the right place for Gin in the daily drink scheme, and if a single-hearted devotion to the great cause enables me to solve the problem,

I shall pass peacefully away some golden evening, conscious that my days have not been entirely valueless, and that in the fairy islands of St. Brandan I may often catch an echo of thankfulness from my brethren who are still investigating in Romano's."

He said this so melodiously, and he looked so delicate and young, that Mr. Florimond was unable to repress a sudden tear, and then, a little ashamed of his emotion, he said quickly, "Ah, Romano's! I often wondered where the decadents drank. I suppose it is very central, indeed, Romano's?"

"That is no Criterion," said Caradoc Milnes, with a boyish smile; "but tell me about yourself. Who are you? What do you neglect?"

"My own interests, I fear," said Mr. Florimond wearily; "I am in a sad way."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said Caradoc Milnes. "Please tell me all about it, and have you got an opium-tainted cigarette? I love cigarettes, they are such a good imitation of tobacco."

"My trouble," said Mr. Florimond, after he had handed the young gentleman an opium-tainted cigarette, "is this: For some years I have earned a moderate but sufficient income by the writing of romantic tales. Until some six months ago I found no difficulty in this branch of literature, and I and the dog Trust were as happy as two people could possibly be. Then came the misfortune which threatens to wreck my life. You and your friends have inaugurated an entirely new style of literature which has become the fashion. No one will look at anything else, and I find myself quite unable to produce anything of the kind. God knows I have tried hard enough," said poor Mr. Florimond, "but I cannot do it. I have taken to drink. I have taken in *Gil Blas*, and it is now several days since I have taken a bath, but it is no use. I have been four days producing the simple epigram, 'Where there's a swill there's a sway,' and days of bar-lounging have not helped me in any way."

"Mr. Florimond," replied the young gentleman, "although our friendship has been so short, yet believe me I have a sincere regard for you; I will tell you

where you make the mistake. To-day a man does not succeed by his writings, but by his personality. I myself, for instance, am great because I am so wonderful in my person. All my 'works' were inspired by an elderly relation whom I maintain."

Mr. Florimond gasped at the sudden revelation. "But I have no elderly relation capable of writing 'works,'" he said, "and my person is, I regret to say, not splendid. I can see no way out of my difficulties, and the hitherto reputable name of John Florimond, son of the late Flag-Admiral Florimond——"

"Seems to be in danger of becoming a Union Jack," said Mr. Milnes, with a genial bow. "But listen," he continued. "I shall not allow a man who is called Florimond to languish forgotten in Tulse Hill. No, Florimond," he said with great earnestness, "indeed it shall not be. *Dabit Milnes his quoque finem*, and I will bring prosperity to you and yours. You shall become the very flower of decadence. Good Buscall shall have a gown of beetle-coloured silk, and there shall be lamb kidneys twice a day for the dog Trust." As he said this the young gentleman raised himself on one arm, gazing at his host with a frank and noble expression.

"My benefactor!" said Mr. Florimond, choking with emotion and seizing the young gentleman by the hand, "how can I express my deep and lasting gratitude? Plunged in the gloomy depths of dark despair, you have come into my life like the pure rays of the morning sun, and if Providence vouchsafes health and strength to this right hand, the name of Caradoc Milnes shall resound for ever in the uncut leaves of the womb of Time!"

"*Pas de fromage, mais encore un p'tit verre de bay rum*," said the young gentleman, in order to conceal his natural and creditable emotion.

At this moment good Buscall announced that lunch was on the table. Lunch was a genial feast. The young gentleman exerted himself to be pleasing, and Mr. Florimond was almost brilliant in the inspiring society of his guest.

Anecdote after anecdote flowed from the lips of the young gentleman, and

Mr. Florimond vicariously tasted many of the pleasures of celebrity.

Mr. Milnes proudly boasted that no pure-minded girl was allowed to speak to him. He told Mr. Florimond how, when he entered the smoking room of the National Liberal Club, an Irish member had once risen and left the room in a marked manner, and he related—it was his dearest reminiscence—how he had once travelled from Charing Cross to the Gare du Nord in evening dress and without an overcoat.

The young gentleman said that he always spent the mornings of each day in receiving interviews from the American papers. "In the afternoon," he added, "my time is much taken up by avoiding the many artists who wish to paint my picture. They are very importunate, and some of them are even going so far as to leave china eggs about in the hope of inducing me to sit."

He was a most entertaining companion, and his boyish glee in his reputation for quite naughty behaviour was a touching and pretty thing to see. His great grief was that the exigencies of publicity kept him so hard at work inventing new vices that he never had time to put any of them into practice.

"And now, Florimond," he said, when good Buscall had brought up the coffee, "we must see what we can do for you. I think I see a good way out of your trouble, and though I am compelled to own that it may present some slight element of inconvenience, I doubt you will be diffident upon so happy a matter. I infer that had you a constant supply of epigrams, and some occasional twisted views of life provided for you, you are quite capable of putting a story together; the mere carpentry and so on is within your power. Exactly, I gathered as much, and I think I can do this for you. I, as you know—the news will be published to-night in a special edition of the *Globe*—am about to leave the public to the care of far less brilliant pens than mine and to retire to Dieppe. Now, during the last year, I have been maintaining a father who became bankrupt in the vain endeavour to pay my Oxford bills. This man, John Milnes, is, I am sorry to say, neither clean nor sober, and though I have found him, in the main,

honest, I should not like to expose him to a sudden temptation. He is, however, a brilliant and witty talker, especially when a little intoxicated, and many of my most celebrated pleasantries have fallen from his lips.

"He was once the editor of a high-class literary journal, and, despite this damning fact, is really a well-read man. I know, of course, that because a man has read a great many proofs, that is no proof that he is a great reader, but John Milnes is, I will certainly say, a well-educated and amusing fellow. Now I have no further use for him, and indeed he would certainly disturb the peace of Dieppe. He will, I feel certain, gladly enter your service for a time as your epigrammatist, and will require nothing but a moderate amount of food and an immoderate amount of drink, or, as he himself would put it, 'enough as is good for a beast.' You will be able to make notes of his best things and use them in your book. I myself learnt shorthand for this very purpose. You could put him in livery as your footman, or he could be 'Uncle Fiddeyment,' or anything you please. My intimate friends always call us the 'Farmers,' because while he *mots* I reap! Now, Florimond, what do you say?" concluded the young gentleman, regarding the novelist with a kindly and interested smile.

"Noblest of creatures," said Mr. Florimond, "you have saved me. John Milnes shall be treated like a brother in this house, and shall be second in my affections to the dog Trust alone."

"Then," said the young gentleman, "give me another drink, send good Buscall for a cab, and we'll go and get him at once."

In less than an hour the cab was standing before the door of the young gentleman's flat, in Jermyn Street, and Mr. Florimond followed his host with great interest into a large and handsome study. The room was brilliantly illuminated with electric light, for though it was broad day in the outside world no ray of sun was ever allowed to penetrate into the study of Caradoc Milnes. A large woolly lamb, a life-like toy, stood upon the hearthrug. The young gentleman said he had been playing with it in the morning, in order to get the right

atmosphere for some nursery tales he was about to write, and, with great affability, he showed Mr. Florimond how, when you pulled the lamb's tail with a sudden jerk it said "Baa" quite distinctly. After a liqueur glass of real water, Mr. Florimond's host left the room, returning shortly with the epigrammatist.

"I have explained to Milnes," he said, "and he quite agrees, so I think you had better take him away with you. It will be convenient to me, as I am expecting some ladies to dinner, and I should not like them to see him. Goodbye Milnes, I have arranged for you to be called 'Uncle Fiddleymment,' and I shall always be pleased to hear of your success, and, while you do not abuse my generosity, you may in some measure depend on my assistance."

So saying, with a warm pressure of Mr. Florimond's hand, the young gentleman, having no more kindness to show him, politely showed him the door.

As he does not appear again in this history, it may be as well to state that the young gentleman did not die at Dieppe, but married the buxom widow of an hotel proprietor at Swanage, and is now living quietly and respectably at that place.

The epigrammatist was an elderly man of full habit and a fine and portly presence. His dissipated, good-humoured old face was clean-shaven, and though it bore undeniable traces of a life that was certainly not all that it should have been, yet the expression was not repulsive, and seemed to show possibilities of better things. Mr. Florimond became on good terms with him at once, and experienced none of the uneasiness that he had felt in the presence of the young gentleman. After a quiet dinner together, they drew up their chairs to the fire, and Mr. Florimond unburdened himself on his troubles and made the epigrammatist acquainted with the situation that he had come to save.

"It can be done, Florimond," said the epigrammatist, or, as Mr. Florimond thought it wise to call him, "Uncle Fiddleymment," "it can be done, and it shall be done. We had better lose no time in beginning. I would suggest that we call the book 'The Floor of Hell,'

so that there can be no possible doubt of our good intentions. Yours must be the constructive part, for, though I am no doubt fitted for the scaffold, I have no talent for building up anything. I will merely supply the modern epigram and idea. The hero must, of course, be a young peer, for even the decadents cannot afford to do without him. Then your heroine can be an advanced girl who objects to being a female, and you can have a low comedy person—an East-end flower girl, say—who objects to being called one. I should also suggest a little psychological study of your intelligent friend, the dog Trust. We have had no decadent animal since Caradoc's early monograph, '*The parrot Balmy Johnson, and why he was a foul bird.*' Style, of course, is very easy, especially in the description. The trick is *most* easy. Suppose, for instance—thank you, just up to the cuts—you are describing a girl's appearance. If you are *not* a decadent, you will compare her hair and lips and hands to some natural object. Her eyes will be like the stars, her mouth the rose—and so on. The decadent, on the other hand, only chooses artificial objects for comparison. It is simply reversing the natural order of things. That is decadence. By the way, I must also remind you that you must always repeat a sentence twice, though in a slightly different form. Honor Oke picked up a Bible one day, and found the idea in the Psalms; it's an old Hebrew use really, though he has pretended it was entirely his own invention. Suppose, for instance, you were talking about a girl, you would say, 'Sybil was very beautiful. Her hands were like carved ivory, white as carved ivory were her hands, and the fingers of her hands were long and slender.' D'you see?—repetition gives you rhythm and the 'carved' creates that exotic impression which is exactly what you want. It's quite easy. Now about corruptness. You will not find it come so easy at first, but there are regular rules. Your young peer, when he falls in love, must say, 'I desire your lips, Irma, it is your lips that I desire.' You must not be indecent, or no one would mind. Frank indecency is quite harmless. You must—no, thank you, no soda; Ill just take it

neat—*suggest* that you are indecent when you really mean nothing whatever. Oh, and you must on no account neglect the 'curiously carved brass bowl.' It is by far the most valuable property we have, much better than the 'strange orchids as lovely as sin.' I remember Oke tried a Japanese lacquer work tray, but it was not successful. You must be very careful not to neglect the curiously carved brass bowl. It is thought to be very immoral. Cigarettes, of course, are *always* opium-tainted, and nothing is drunk except out of Venetian glass—the 'bubble' of Venetian glass is a good word. I'm sure I don't know why, but Venetian glass always has a bubble reputation. You might put a remark about it in the mouth of a Canon. Oh, don't trouble to open any more brandy—I will change to whisky, thanks. I think," said Uncle Fiddeyment, as he replenished his glass, "that there is not much more—except, of course, the moon. The moon, as you doubtless know, is always like a piece of carved silver."

As he said this, the epigrammatist disposed his length on the sofa and was fast asleep in a moment. Mr. Florimond slept but little. He began to see with great vividness the manner in which he would do the new book. Uncle Fiddeyment was the ideal person to work with. He was so sure of his ground, he knew exactly what to do, it was a great comfort to have him. Good Buscall would, doubtless, be difficult at first, because Mr. Florimond knew that she was a woman with strong views on temperance; but that might be arranged. It would now no longer be necessary for him to be intoxicated himself—a thing he disliked very much—and his own return to sobriety would go far, he thought, to condone the occasional potations of the epigrammatist.

The next few weeks passed with great rapidity, and in the Maison Florimond the advent of spring was almost unnoted. Out in the world young men's fancies were lightly turning to thoughts of love till they were giddy, and hundreds of Wanton-Lapwings had got themselves a whole Heralds' College full of newer crests; but steady toil and high endeavour banished the influence of a mere season from Mr. Florimond's mind. The

"Floor of Hell" began to approach completion, and Mr. Florimond's hopes to glow like the pavements of heaven.

It is true that there were a few trivial worries as the days went on.

Although (as Mr. Florimond would now have expressed it) "life had become to him like the delicate sound of a lute," it was impossible to avoid an occasional rift within the instrument. At times Uncle Fiddeyment would produce quite the wrong sort of epigram, and though Mr. Florimond filled the house with intoxicating liquors, becoming a perfect publican in the way he taxed his energies to please his *collaborateur*, at times he found it difficult. Every day, with a copy of "Marius the Epicurean" on a table in front of him, Mr. Florimond said his PATER noster and his MAX vobiscum: but even this styleographic devotion did not always console him. When, for example, Mr. Florimond was writing a gloomy and pessimistic chapter, Uncle Fiddeyment would give utterance to the lightest and most joyous epigrams, and when there was a scene of sunshine and laughter, the epigrammatist would be as bitter as the small beer he was compelled to drink in the morning. However, Mr. Florimond had read his *Candide*, and knew that we must cultivate our garden, and in time he found his remedy in dieting his friend, with the latter's ready concurrence.

If on the Wednesday night Mr. Florimond knew that Thursday morning would bring him to a Manfredic scene of misery and death, he would give Mr. Milnes hot crabs and rum punch for supper, and the epigrams next morning were as gloomy and pessimistic as could be desired. On the other hand, champagne and a sandwich at midday would produce light and airy nothings for the salon in less than three-quarters of an hour.

It was when some two-thirds of the book was written that Mr. Florimond began to notice that Uncle Fiddeyment seemed to be less brilliant than of old. About the same time, he remarked that the epigrammatist drank much less than was his wont, and was also very much neater and cleaner in his personal appearance.

As the days went on the epigrams



"THE EPIGRAMS BECAME FEWER"

became fewer and fewer and very feeble, and one day, when Uncle Fiddeyment came down to breakfast actually wearing a frock coat, and a bunch of violets in his buttonhole, Mr. Florimond felt compelled to ask him for an explanation. It was at once forthcoming, and while the bacon grew cold and the morning's letters remained unopened, the two men looked at each other with consternation in their eyes.

It was very simple : Mr. Milnes, living in close contact with so truly excellent a man as Mr. Florimond, was unable to resist the good influence of his example. As his better nature reasserted himself and he began to seriously think of turning his attention to a more worthy life, such as missionary enterprise or the writing of sermons for the overworked parish priest, Mr. Milnes' power of epigram entirely left him, and over the untasted breakfast the two friends discussed the question with all the solemnity its importance demanded.

While he was trying to find a way out of the difficulty, Mr. Florimond noticed a letter from his publishers, Messrs. Pedlar and Lobby. He opened it half unconsciously, and then the words suddenly arrested his attention. It seemed that the decadent bubble had suddenly burst completely, owing to the sudden death of the middle-aged gentleman, who was immediately cremated at Woking, with as little said about him as possible. Surfeited with novel sins, the public were clamouring for ancient virtues, and Pedlar and Lobby implored Mr. Florimond to send them an armoured romance at his very earliest convenience.

That night Uncle Fiddeyment took the train to Swanage, and entered the young gentleman's service as head waiter, a post which he long filled with great dignity.

Mr. Florimond saw him off, and on returning, while Mrs. Ruscull sold two hundred brandy bottles to the dustman,

sat down to his desk and on a virgin sheet of paper wrote these words :

"Two horsemen came galloping over the plain." Then, lighting a candle, he went

happily to bed. Mr. Florimond sank into a deep sleep.

There was nobody there but the dog Trust.



"THERE WAS NOBODY THERE BUT THE DOG TRUST"

A House that Links Several Centuries

WRITTEN BY BEATRICE KNOLLYS. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS

THE County of Kent, owing to its proximity to London, abounds with houses of historical interest, for just as in these days men of note are eager to escape from the turmoil of town to the brisk breezes of Scotland or the slumbrous air of the South, so in those times the kings of camp, court or counting-house were only too glad of release from the busy whirl of their London world to the freedom of country quiet in a county like Kent, which, while distant enough for peace, was yet close enough for touch with town. Also the close proximity of Kent to the sea-coast and to smuggling centres were, you may be sure, attractions in past days that affected all classes. Kent, too, as the great highway between London and the sea, had roads, as made by the Romans and others, far superior to those in more remote counties, which rendered travelling less toilsome and dangerous.

Among the many interesting houses still existing in this "Garden of England" is one which forms a long link of ages, uniting as it does the twelfth century with our own nineteenth century, for Yaldham Manor House, near Wrotham, was built by Sir Thomas de Aldham, who lived in the reign of Richard I.; and this king is said to have stayed here on his way to the Crusades, his host accompanying him to the Holy Wars, and being present at the siege of Acre in 1191.

Whether Sir Thomas de Aldham gave his name to this house or whether this house gave its name to him is a

moot question, but that Yaldham or Aldham, also sometimes called Eldenham, is a corruption of "ye olde home" or "ham," a dwelling, is fairly self-evident.

That it was a place of importance and considerable extent is proved by a grant given to the Priory of Cumbwell by Robert de Eldenham, in 1220, out of this property, while mention is made in the Assize Roll of Kent in 1293 of the bucks in the "Park of Aldham" then in the possession of Baldwin de Eldham.

About the beginning of the fourteenth century Yaldham passed into the hands of the Peckham family, a daughter of the sonless Sir Thomas de Aldham having married a Martin Peckham, descendant of John Peckham, High Constable of Rochester Castle in the reign of King John, and a crusader of note. Connected thus as Yaldham Manor was with Kentish families of Crusaders, the Great Hall must often, as the banqueting-room of these soldiers of the Cross, have been the scene of many sad partings after the farewell cup.

This hall carries our imagination back without difficulty to those old days as we look around and up at its lofty roof, where one of the cross-rafters still bears marks of the smoke when the fire burnt in the centre of the room; and we can picture the tired pilgrims huddling round it for warmth as they rested for the night amongst the rushes strewing the floor ere they continued their way next morning to Canterbury, whither they were going by the "Pilgrim's Road," which still exists close by, to worship at the shrine of Thomas à Becket. Here also the distinguished family of Peckhams, who were owners of Yaldham

about four hundred years, from 1327 to 1713, must have frequently entertained celebrated people, for the social position occupied by the Peckhams and the comparative short distance of their manor house from London kept them in touch with the world and its notabilities.

One of the Peckhams was six times member of Parliament, and twice High Sheriff in the reigns of Edward III. and Richard II. A Reginald Peckham was another member of Parliament in the reign of Henry VI.; and a James

which is only about five minutes' walk from Yaldham Manor; while Hever Castle, in Kent, Anne Boleyn's old home, was also within easy distance of Yaldham, so it is most likely that she often met her future Blue-beard husband, Henry VIII., when he went to honour—mark the word, which partakes of cynicism in connection with the royal butcher—when he went to honour the Esquire of his Body-Guard, Reginald de Peckham, who died on February 27th, 1525, and was buried in Wrotham Church, whose old square tower can be



YALDHAM MANOR

Peckham was member of Parliament and Sheriff in Edward IV.'s time, and married a daughter of the Burgoyne family. In the Great Hall of Yaldham Manor, with its beautiful oriel window, Anne Boleyn is said to have danced, and most probably with Henry VIII. as partner; for Reginald Peckham, the elder, was squire of the body to the sovereign, who presented Anne Boleyn's father, Sir Thomas Boleyn, afterwards Earl of Ormonde and Wiltshire, with the mansion and estate of St. Clere,

seen from the windows of Yaldham Manor. It was to this church that James Peckham left by his will, dated May 12th, 1400, to the "fabric" of St. George's, 26s. 8d.; to the light of the Blessed Mary, two cows; to the sacrist, 3s. 4d.; and a similar amount to each of the two clerks.

Only about two years after his squire's death Henry VIII. began to have scruples regarding his marriage with his brother's widow, Catherine of Arragon, although it had taken him seventeen years to

realise the unlawfulness. We can easily picture the gay gallants, and fascinating, flighty, fair dames dancing to the music of the performers in the minstrel gallery at the west end of the hall, whose arched pintoil roof of massive oak beams, and broad mullioned window enriched with the arms of the Peckham family, formed a fitting frame to the fair

bluff, burly, brutal Henry VIII., and trying to hide in the folds of her sleeve and gown her deformity, the little sixth finger on her right hand. Gay, brilliant butterfly, so ignorant of the future Fate and Folly have in store for her, as she whiles away the happy hours in the big hall till nightfall gives the signal that dancing is at an



INTERIOR OF GREAT HALL

women and the gorgeous gallants of the Tudor period.

From the small quaint shutter window, high up in the east wall of the hall, and approached by a corridor on the next storey upstairs, we can throw imagination back some centuries as we look down. Fair Anne Boleyn, with her pink and white complexion and dainty figure, tripping the measure with the

end; for in those days the custom prevailed that with the shades of evening this popular amusement gave place to others, such as cards, backgammon (then called "tables"), or music on the cittern or the virginals.

Certainly the curious stone ornament above the stone arch of the original only entrance, resembling in appearance a sort of mask face, could tell tales of

much historical interest could its mouth but speak, for this ornament dates from the end of the twelfth century, and prevailed in architectural designs to the middle of the fourteenth. The larger part of the house is said to have been burnt down in the fourteenth century, but "ye hall" and "ye parlor" escaped the conflagration, and as they were the principal rooms their survival is of more historical interest and importance.

The grandson of Henry VIII.'s "squire of the body," another Reginald Peckham, caused Yaldham estate to be disgavelled, a very ancient custom dating, some say, from the ancient Britons, the Welsh, others say from the Normans or the Saxons, but Kent is the only county where this old division of land still holds, by which all surviving children share equally the property. This Reginald de Peckham who disgavelled Yaldham Manor, which "he held of the Manor of Lullingstone Castle by Knight's service," died in the year of Wyatt's Rebellion, in which he seems to have taken no part, though "the rebels ascended Wrotham Hill directly under Yaldham, Master Peckham's house, and an engagement took place in Blacksole Field with shot and arrows."

The old elm avenue of Yaldham Manor, along which these men of Kent marched to fight and flight, still exists, though the road that formerly led from it to Ightham has disappeared, and fields now cover its place. This elm avenue is no longer used as a drive, yet it is still lively at times, when at midnight is heard the passing of a phantom coach and four driven by a headless horseman. By the way most of the ghosts of this neighbourhood have no head, in compliment, as an old gentleman used to remark, to hapless, headless Anne Boleyn.

After being from about 1327 to 1713 in the possession of the Peckhams, whose descendants now live in Su-sex, Yaldham again changed hands. The next family of note connected with the place were the Evelyns, a name handed down to posterity, by the garrulous ancestor who was the writer of the well-known Diary, which is still in the possession of the present-day Evelyns. In or near the year 1733 Yaldham was

bought by Mr. William Evelyn Glanville, and re-united to St. Clere, and through Mr. Evelyn Glanville it became the property of the Evelyns of Wootton, Dorking. It is now owned by General Goldsworthy, a member of Parliament.

A curious item in connection with its tithes is that they were at one time let by the Dean and Chapter of Rochester for 6s. 8d. and two fat capons!

The year before last the Archaeological Society visited Yaldham Manor, on account of its historical interest, an interest which continues from the great hall to the adjoining smaller apartment now used as a dining room, for its old walls are hung with tapestried scenes of bygone days, and its quaint fireplace and handsome sideboard are exact copies from twelfth century pictures, while the red morocco chairs with the gold Crusader's cross, the crest of the Goldsworthys, stamped on the back of each, is appropriate to a house where so many Crusaders have lived, loved, and lingered on their way to the Holy Wars.

The windows of this dining-room look out on to the lawn, now covering with its green mantle the former foundations of another part of the old house, which, as previously stated, is supposed to have been burnt down about the fourteenth century; but the massive oak pillar of the house is still to be seen in the remaining portion. In those times, too, Yaldham boasted not only a large mansion but also a fine park well stocked with deer. Mention is made of the park and deer, as early as the thirteenth century, in the following quaintly-worded statement:—

"The jurors make presentment that Richard de Pimpe, the sub-escheator, after the death of Baldwin de Eldham, seized the manor of Aldham into the hand of the lord king, and held it in the seizin of the lord king, and caused to be taken in the park of the same (Baldwin) ten does and one buck; they know not by what warrant; and Richard says that on the decease of the aforesaid Baldwin, two deer were killed in the same park, and that he took the aforesaid deer, so killed, by command of Malcolm de Harle the escheator. And



INTERIOR OF THE GREAT HALL.

(in token) that he took no others he prays that inquiries may be made. And the jurors elected for this purpose say upon their oath that the aforesaid Richard took nine does and one buck in the same park, as was before stated."

Poaching seems to have been then as popular a pursuit as now, but more lucrative, and on a larger scale; and Yaldham appears to have been especially a happy hunting-ground for poachers and others of that class: for mention is made that "Lawrence Shrep, of Westerham, Theobald le Wodeward and Lawrence Hoppe, of Bradestad, together with other persons unknown, stole at Ealdham, in Wrotham, from Geoffrey, the son of Robert Ffilote, in the night, two cows, belonging to the same Geoffrey, valued at twenty shillings, and from John Styward, at Ealdham, they secretly stole one ox, one cow, and

one heifer, valued at thirty shillings. Therefore let them be taken."

Afterwards the sheriff testifies that the aforesaid Lawrence, Theobald and Lawrence are not to be found, "but have withdrawn themselves." The jurors, however, suspect them of the thefts, "therefore let them be demanded and outlawed. They had no chattels, neither were they in a pledge, because they are strangers."

A Nicholas Seyntebarbe is also accused on another occasion of a robbery in connection with Yaldham, then owned by a Martin de Pecham, but the man was acquitted. It was a son of Martin Pecham or Peckham, by the way, who is mentioned in the "aid to knight the Black Prince" as a contributor of ten shillings for the fourth part of a knight's fee, which Martin de Pecham held in Ealdham.

In A.D. 1327 Yaldham is also noticed in the old Chronicles, where an Achardus de Aldham is marked as the Acard de Eldham in the Subsidy Roll, and he is no doubt the one referred to in a fine of 5 Edward II., who acquired "1 messuage, 150 acres of land, 6 acres of meadow, 25 acres of wood, 10s. rent, and the rent of 12 hens and 60 eggs, with appurtenances in Wrotham, from Edmund, son of Lawrence de Poelle."


How quaintly these old documents read, and how difficult it is to realise the evident importance of these 12 hens and

60 eggs to Achardus de Aldham, now himself a mere handful of dust.

Yes, Kent abounds with bye-gone glories and trifles, their shadows framed by the numerous ancient houses scattered all over the county. Hever Castle and its unfortunate queen, Anne Boleyn; Penshurst Place and the Sydneys; Knole Park and Buckhurst; Allington Castle and the Wyatts.

Yes; in the "Garden of England" have bloomed fair flowers and interesting weeds, in the many noted personages whose hopes, aims, ambitions, history has handed down to us.





THE STORY OF A DELUSION.

WRITTEN BY MARY DE MORGAN. ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS



ILL middle life, Miss Charlotte Milman could boast of no event which could leave a landmark.

If it be true that "every dog has his day," hers had been of such a microscopic character that it would have required a lens of a high power to discern it. Her life had been passed in a small well-built Bloomsbury house, with an ample supply of food and clothes; and of this fact her mother reminded her, when she showed any unholy desire for variety. "You have so much to be thankful for, that I beg we may have no wicked grumbling. Moreover, you know that when your father and I are taken, you will always be provided for." These last words had been so often used as a weapon wherewith to repress revolt, that they had lost meaning to their bearer, and only suggested a form of slavery.

Mrs. Milman was an insignificant-looking little woman, whose face, though she inveighed against grumbling, was a chronic protest against existence. As her daughter neared thirty, and she recognised that she was not exempt

from the marks of time, she considered a possible effort towards enlarging her life. "It seems to me," she said hesitatingly to her husband, "that it might be a good thing if Chatty got about a little more. She is getting on, and she doesn't seem likely to marry."

"What do you want to do? You can't force a thing of that kind, and we need not be anxious about the child's future, as we know she will be provided for," came the ready response; and the mother, easily satisfied, let the question drop.

Two sons there were, as well as Charlotte, older and younger than she, and their father, not being in their case satisfied of the righteousness of trusting their future to Providence, had exerted himself to embark one as a clergyman, and the other as a sheep-farmer in New Zealand, in which waiks of life both had prospered; the clergyman obtaining a wealthy helpmate and preferment in Devonshire, and the sheep-farmer farming sheep successfully at the Antipodes.

For the daughter, life maintained its monotony. She inherited her mother's insignificance of appearance, and even in first youth the greyness of her future seemed to have set its seal upon her. In due course, when she had passed her fortieth year, her father died, and

Charlotte was rather shocked to find that her first legitimate sorrow affected her so little. Mr. Milman had passed his life between a City office and some careful geological investigations, pursued, he said, for the love of Science, which took him regularly to a club, where he

small difference in its routine; and Mrs. Milman, having adopted permanently the rôle of invalid, felt absolved from making any effort for any one save herself.

Once, and once only, did Charlotte, after her father's death, enter a faint protest against this gruesome slipping away of life.

Her mother, having a love of the seamy side, as revealed in the daily papers, read aloud an account of the working of a prison, and commented on the horrors of such an institution.

"But do you think it would be very different?" remarked the daughter meditatively.

"Very different!" with a suspicious look over the spectacles. "What do you mean, Charlotte?"

"Why, I mean it seems very like our life here. They have their food regularly, and go out and exercise at the same time every day, and it seems to me that's just what we do here."

Mrs. Milman gasped. "If you mean to imply, Charlotte," she cried, "that your happy, comfortable existence can be compared with that of the unhappy wretches who are justly suffering for their sins, I am ashamed of you; and I beg that we may have no more such wicked talk! Consider all the things you have to be thankful for—and you particularly, as, being provided for, you need never have anxiety about the future. I am ashamed of you!"

Charlotte considered in silence, and continued her exciting occupation of darning a table-cloth.

Six years later, Mrs. Milman followed her husband, and the daughter's world underwent a

real convulsion. She shed tears of honest grief at the loss of her life's companion; but, if Dame Conventional Morality, who is for ever at our elbow, had suffered the truth to be known, to have to shed them was rather an agreeable excitement.



"MRS. MILMAN WAS AN INSIGNIFICANT LOOKING LITTLE WOMAN"

met kindred souls and enjoyed their society. Science proving engrossing, he had no time for investigating his daughter, or becoming acquainted with the strata of her nature. The absence of the head of the house, save for some curtailment of its expenditure, made

The Rev. James, the clerical brother, arrived from Devonshire to perform the last obsequies, and other relations who rarely met, foregathered with an uncomfortable conviction that they were all growing older.

After the dispersing of the clan, when the Rev. James and the family lawyer had held conclave, the former addressed his sister after their evening meal.

"My dear Chatty, you have now to think of your own future. Even in this hour of affliction I am sure you will recognise how much you have to be thankful for in the tender forethought of our beloved parents, by which all monetary anxiety is spared to you. You will be mistress of something near £100 a year." He paused for the expected expression of thankfulness.

"Mother and I spent nearly £500 in this house, James."

"Undoubtedly," a little testily. "I am not suggesting that you should attempt to continue residing here. The house would be quite unnecessarily, *improperly* large for a single lady. As you are aware, some of our dear mother's income arose from a life annuity, and I believe you will agree with me that our revered father did the just and equitable thing when he left his property to be divided equally among his three children, for they were all equally dear to him." He paused, and supported by the thought that his private purse was to be enriched by £100 a year, took another glass of wine, and continued, "I shall at once communicate with Walter Henry, and the lease of this house can doubtless be disposed of, and I should advise your seeking some well-conducted inexpensive boarding-house in this neighbourhood, with which you are so thoroughly familiar, or perhaps you might like to become a paying guest in a family." He waited for his sister to express her views. Apparently she had none, for she only replied "Very well."

He continued, rather lamely, "I should advise you to do nothing in a hurry. I myself must return to Myncombe tomorrow, but if you would like a little holiday after the sad trial through which you have just passed, perhaps—" there was a hesitation conquered by the

softening reminiscence of the increased income—"I may say, I feel sure my dear Agnes would be glad to receive you for, say, a week or ten days. I will consult her and communicate with you."

His sister said "Thank you."

"It is even possible that, if you would like to try a simple country life, you might find a refined inexpensive home in a neighbouring vicarage—some of my brother clergy are willing to add to their incomes by receiving ladies on moderate terms; and then you would also have the solace of devoting yourself to parish work for the Lord."

Again Charlotte, sitting with eyes intent on a group of chimney pots, which she had for long years examined through the same window, murmured "Perhaps," and her brother, finding such ready acquiescence, dropped the discussion. Long habits of submission having robbed her of the power to make plans for herself, she would have carried out the scheme suggested, had it not been for the intervention of a friend.

This friend, Mrs. Martindale, had always been to her a wonder. Louisa, her old school chum, seemed to her strangely fortunate. If Charlotte had lived little, Louisa had much. She had been twice a wife. Firstly to an officer in the army, and then to a rich Singapore merchant, who had left her a wealthy widow. She boasted of having lived in every quarter of the globe, and though no older than Charlotte, she was a grandmother, her first-born being married in India, and now she lived, with a son and daughter of the first marriage and the various children of the second, at Brighton.

She came upon her friend unexpectedly, and her presence had the effect of letting in fresh air.

"My poor dear! What are you going to do with yourself? Less than a hundred a year to live upon! It's too bad! Why on earth couldn't your people?—but they're gone, so I don't want to say anything against them. And your brother advises a boarding-house! Don't think of it for a moment! My dear girl, they're most dreary things; and as for going down to Devonshire, I'm sure I wouldn't. You won't be

comfortable there. Sisters-in-law aren't any practical comfort. The relationship don't wash. I ought to know, for I've had fourteen, with my brother's wives, and the Captain's sisters, and poor Joseph's. Much better come to me for a bit, and we'll cheer you up, I've lots of room, and in a month Jack will be home from Sandhurst. You won't mind the young folk; I believe they'll do you good. Elsie is really first-rate; you'll like her; and what I call the schoolroom family isn't bad. Come next week—too soon to go out? Then wait a month. You won't get all the getting rid of the things done at once, but when you move you *must* come to us. As for the boarding-house plan—my dear girl, it's absurd!"

It was rather a popular trait of Mrs. Martindale's, with her female friends, that she indiscriminately addressed them as "girls," and had a pleasing knack of forgetting ages.

Charlotte protested feebly against plunging into improper dissipation, but Louisa's firmer will conquered, and there was satisfaction when a half-hearted invitation arrived from Devonshire, in telling Agnes that, having promised her old friend at Brighton, the Devonshire visit must be postponed.

No newly incarnated soul, retaining memory of previous incarnations in other worlds, could have felt more bewildered at fresh surroundings than did Charlotte on her arrival at Mrs. Martindale's. The house was large, replete with every comfort, and struck the new-comer as wickedly luxurious—a semi-asceticism having been part of the Bloomsbury code. And could it be right for people to be so unconcealedly happy! She felt outraged by the existence of Louisa's eldest daughter, Elsie Gilbert, a young lady with a strong personality, and dressed exactly up-to-date! What was Louisa about to allow fashions so unhackneyed, for had not she and her mother always held that an absolutely new fashion was almost immoral, only becoming fit for the regenerate, after custom had made it familiar! Then Jack, the twenty-years-old son from Sandhurst, was improperly well-mannered and self-possessed, and the schoolboy sons and ten-year-old daughter of the second

marriage so impertinently young and happy. Other guests there were, too, in the house—cousins of Louisa's first husband; the wife of a Russian—and all Continentals, the Bloomsbury code suspected.

The first night in her own room Charlotte gave way to bitter tears. She was hopelessly out of key with her surroundings. She had pined for liberty and event—and now she almost longed for grey monotony! What part had she in such a cheery, brilliant world? And, underlying the disapprobation, was an irritating feeling of envy, a longing to have real share in this light-hearted life. Her body had aged, but her spirit, not having known the experiences of youth, remained tiresomely young, and she could have taken part as a young girl in the scenes in which she found herself. The little dried-up woman of fifty was more on an equality with the blooming Elsie than with her mother!

As days passed, in spite of kindness shown her, her inability to amalgamate with the household became more apparent, and her presence was a burden. Jack, who ruled his mother with the tyranny of handsome masculine youth at twenty, had voted Miss Milman "an old bore," and asked when the "mourner" was going to take her sorrows elsewhere?

"Oh! don't be unkind, Jack. You don't know what sort of life poor Chatty has led. That house in B—— Street; it gives me the blues to think of it. Always there with those terrible parents of hers—all her youth. But she never had any youth. It should be made criminal for parents to keep daughters so. No wonder she is rather a dreary person now!"

"Grew mildewed, did she? Poor old Mildews! I'm very sorry for her, but it doesn't seem to be rubbing her up much being here, and she is a bit of a wet blanket." The name "Mildews" hung by Charlotte for private use of the younger members of the family, and Louisa began to wonder whether she had done well in the kindly impulse which bade her try to brighten her old friend's life. Perhaps she had better have gone to the Devonshire brother. It would have to be a boarding-house in the end—that was evident.

A slight incident altered Charlotte's horizon.

At a noisy afternoon tea, Geff, the second boy, suddenly announced: "Mother, old Barclay's back again at the 'Grand.'"

"How do you know?"

"I met him, and he told me, and he's coming here to-night about nine."

"You told him we should all be out, I hope."

"I didn't know. I said 'All right.'"

"Geff, how tiresome you are! You should have remembered. You know what a fuss he made last time he found no one in. Elsie and I must go to the Colman's. You boys will have to give up the theatre."

At this there was an outcry, Geff pertinently asking, "What good shall we be to an old Johnnie like that?"

"I really don't know what to do," lamented Louisa. "I've no one to send all that way, and it's past six now. Chatty—of course, I forgot! You'll be at home. You can receive him and explain, and give him some coffee, and let him sit and talk a little"—rising from the table as she spoke.

"My dear Louisa—I really—I don't know Mr. Barclay," murmured Charlotte, following Mrs. Martindale out of the room. "Who is he?"

"Oh, I'll tell you all about him—not but what he is sure to do that for himself. He is rather deaf; but you'll manage with the trumpet." Then, as Charlotte's protests continued: "Chatty, you don't mean to say you're prudish—at your age—with an old invalid like that! How unutterably absurd!"—with a too evident endeavour to repress a laugh.

Nothing disturbed Charlotte like ridicule. "Of course not," she gasped, turning very red; "but what do you want me to say?"

"Oh! only to explain that stupid boy's mistake. Walter Barclay's about the oldest friend I have, and I shouldn't mind about it if he weren't such a poor creature. Coming out at all is difficult to him, though, of course, he drives everywhere."

"Does he live here?"

"Well, not exactly, but he's at the Grand a great part of his time—virtually

keeps a room there, but he has chambers in town. He made a most wretched marriage, and they have been separated for years. She lives in Paris, and he makes her a good allowance. He is very wealthy, but he gets rather a dreary life of it with his loneliness and his health, and he is really a very clever man. His heart's been weak for years, and now the doctors think there is something amiss with his spine: so you do your best like a good soul, for he's touchy, and I don't want to offend him."

Miss Milman had never in her life suffered more embarrassment than was engendered by the prospect of half-an-hour alone with Mrs. Martindale's old friend. The shyness of the girl of fifteen distorted the woman of fifty, and, as a result of her unnatural life, the nauseous word "proper" danced in her mind at every turn. Privately she wished Louisa would be a little less free.

Alone in the drawing-room, playing with a bit of needlework behind the coffee cups, excitement gave her a flush, and almost robbed her of speech, when the door opened to admit a thin, elderly gentleman, carefully dressed, with a sickly face.

Apologies and explanations were awkwardly made, till the evident annoyance of the guest gave her courage. She had been accustomed to deafness in her father, and the ear-trumpet was no difficulty. "She felt herself quite ashamed of being the only one to receive him, but Mrs. Martindale had begged her to explain, etc. Surely he would rest, and have some coffee." His brow cleared a little: he guessed at a sympathetic soul, who resented Louisa's carelessness, and sat down sufficiently near for the ear-trumpet to be available, and lamented the health which obliged him to be so careful. She at once gave him sympathy, for was she not used to invalids? Thus encouraged, he enlarged on his feebleness with keen interest, and found enjoyment in enumerating symptoms to a fresh audience. The man was a mighty egotist, who had never met with a sufficiently patient listener to satisfy his soul. Here was one who appeared to have unlimited appetite for any details of life he chose to give.

She, on the contrary, felt a sense of flattery in the fact that a "clever man" (had not Louisa called him clever?), should honour her with confidence. He spoke of long years of ill health, hindering work that otherwise might have been of use to the world, and mentioned having contributed articles to the *Fortnightly Review*. Was not this the hall mark of intellect? She remembered how her father had spoken of that magazine, and regarded him with something like awe. It dawned upon him that as she could take such intelligent interest in his sufferings, she must be a superior woman. He asked, "Was she to stay long? Did she know the neighbourhood well? The Devil's Dyke—Downs? Why, she had seen nothing. He drove every day; it was essential for such health as he had, and she must allow him to be her guide in a place he knew by heart." Charlotte's pulses thumped. She supposed it was all right. Louisa would tell her. But would a perfect gentleman and a writer in the *Fortnightly Review* suggest anything unseemly?

When Mrs. Martindale and Elsie returned from their dinner party, they found Mr. Barclay in the best of tempers, discoursing to Miss Milman of why he had disobeyed the doctor's orders, and not gone to the Riviera last winter. He chaffed Louisa about her carelessness with good temper, and told her he had arranged to drive Miss Milman to the Dyke next day. Mrs. Martindale agreeing placidly, made matters easier for her friend by saying, afterwards, "He wasn't a bit huffy. Are you really going to bother to drive with him tomorrow, Chatty? You are worth your weight in gold, my dear; it is good of you. I don't want to offend him, on the children's account, you see. He is Jack's godfather, and was such a friend of his father's, and he has no near relations of his own. But I shall be very much taken up with the Mannings coming for the next few days, and if you don't mind going about with him a bit it will be kind."

The idea of obliging her friend set Charlotte's scruples at rest, and the hint of a possible benefit to the young people made the path of pleasure seem to be

one of duty. A guest should always do her best to please her hostess—her mother had said that—and particularly a hostess so kind as Louisa.

The drives themselves were enjoyable to her, and she grew in her own estimation when she found that the flattering confidences increased rather than diminished. He reported to her each day of aches and pains, and she pleased him by remembering all he had told her, and recalling it to his memory.

The friendship, unexciting to outsiders, sent a warmth through her nature, and acted as a charm in altering her position in the house. Of a sudden she felt herself amalgamating with the Martindale world, and the feeling that her presence was an oppression died. The new interest worked upon her like a pair of moral spectacles, enabling her to discover the wants and needs of others. She no longer grudged their youth to the young people. Mr. Barclay had spoken to her of "how we should treat young folk," and it had raised her to a platform of superiority. She discovered feminine methods of usefulness, which softened the youthful towards her. Her needle wrought initial letters into Jack's handkerchiefs, after a fashion to produce envy in fellow-cadets. She was repaid by speedy championship. Horace, the second boy, repeating Jack's own phrase, and wondering when "Old Mildews" would go, was told scornfully that to wear a jest to the bone was "bad form," and that he, Jack, considered Miss Milman to be a "good old sort," and he "hoped she wasn't going yet."

A sudden scheme of *tableau vivants* rendered her usefulness dear to all, and she found herself laughing, as she had never laughed before, at scenes from "Alice in Wonderland," and rejoicing over the frequent calls for "Miss Milman!" from young lips.

Discovering Elsie alone on the balcony, contemplating the moon in a tremulous condition of low spirits bordering on tears, a fellow-feeling suggested an incipient love affair, and a little sympathy evoked the confidence: "Mr. Anstruther had not been near them for a fortnight, and his furlough would so soon be over; he could not mean to return to

India without coming to say 'Good-bye' at least."

Then followed much consolation from the elder woman, and outpourings of hopes and fears from the younger. And when the time came to say "Good-night," the whole-hearted pressure of kisses and grip of arms around her neck, made tears in Charlotte's eyes and a lump in her throat. The mummy enveloped by her parents in conventions and priggery had suddenly become a human being, ready to sprout out affections and interests at a touch.

When the appointed six weeks' visit was over, she was urged by all to stay, but was firm in going, remembering the precept taught by her father, "Always leave while your welcome is warm." But where to go? She suggested the London boarding-house, and Louisa scoffed. "Why go back to town at all? Why not take rooms here? You can get them cheaply in the smaller streets, if taken by the year, or even by the month. It is standing empty these people dread. You wouldn't mind a ground-floor sitting-room, it is always cheaper, and Mary has an aunt in — street, etc., etc." She readily saw the wisdom of the plan, and would prefer the ground floor sitting-room, remembering privately what had been said of the trial of stairs for those in weak health. All being successfully arranged, she embarked on her own tiny *ménage*, and the Devonshire brother being informed, saw nothing to object to. "Brighton seems to me a most suitable place of residence," he wrote. "It will be agreeable to you to be near your friends, and I doubt not you will find many ladies, circumstanced like yourself, who will give you pleasant society. I should advise your attending St. J—'s Church. The vicar, Marston, is an old friend of mine, and not too extreme in his views, a thing you will have to be on your guard about in Brighton, from what I hear. Doubtless his wife will call on you, etc., etc." Another more important voice spoke approval of her choice. "I am glad you have resolved against settling in town," the valetudinarian said, when driving on the Downs. "London becomes more and more unhealthy; I

feel that I shall have to be there less and less, Brighton suits me very well."

Settled in her new life, she felt excitement at having for the first time to consider only her own tastes in arrangements, and enjoyed what to others might have seemed a dreary liberty. She fell in with her brother's wishes of attending the church he named; received calls from the vicar and his wife, for whom she also agreed to take harness, in a small degree, and felt important at being brought against strangers as a human being moving on her own lines. Mr. Barclay approved her rooms and the comfort of an easy chair, which happened to suit his back. "It was so hard to find anything that really allayed his suffering, this was set at a most convenient angle."

What had been before only a dancing beam, strong enough to cheer and warm, but scarcely to be relied upon, became suddenly a reality in her mind, an illumination with brilliance enough for all dark corners, when the new friend spoke to her of his own unhappy marriage, and had the air of consulting her as to steps to be taken. The separated wife in Paris had turned restive, demanded more money, and had written a letter of threatening violence. "There was nothing against her. She heard of him as leading a life of reckless extravagance; it was he who had driven her from his side. She found the allowance made quite insufficient, and demanded that the £1,000 should be raised to £1,500. The law would be on her side if she sought restoration of the wife's rights, but for both their sakes would be willing to spare the scandal, etc."

He had applied to Louisa for sympathy, but at the moment could gain no attention. Mumps had broken out in the household, and she could give only a querulous half-hearing to any one with normal temperature and face in good drawing. He drove from Louisa to Chatty, thankful that some women were able to heed the real sorrows of life, unengrossed by petty childish trouble.

Charlotte flushed when he told her he had come to consult her in a private trouble, and her heart beat when he read the letter from Paris, and handed it to her to re-peruse. "What a woman!

She was shocked to think her sex owned such an one! A thousand a year! She was a millionaire!"

"Life in Paris is cheap on the whole. It is not enormous, but she ought to make it do," he mused. "And she used to be a clever economist. She may have methods of disposing of money. I suspect gambling."

"Gambling? Why, do women—ladies—ever gamble?" cried Chatty, shocked at the revelation. He smiled amused superiority at her elderly innocence, and his hand touched hers in receiving back his letter.

"Not women like you," he answered, the smile softening his words. "But there are women and women; no human being is more ignorant of another than a good woman of a worthless one." The words conveyed to the listener far more than to the speaker.

When he had left her, Charlotte stood much higher in her mental estimate of self. "To have been chosen as special confidant by such a man! Such a confidence could not have been given unless there were real friendship. It made a link that must last. She felt she had a claim upon him now. Friendship was very beautiful, but, alas! that it must often take the place of what under happier circumstances might have——" She called herself to order, and heaved a sigh. Should she not be grateful for the boon of such friendship, and she had the pleasing feeling of being a leading figure in a romance.

The ice broken, the subject of the unhappy marriage was touched on again in drives and visits. Sympathy and admiration for his noble conduct were given in doses which gave their recipient the satisfaction of a famished man receiving food. Her curiosity as to the appearance and bearing of this female Gorgon was great. How strange that he, with his great intellectual powers, could have been so deceived! But of course she was beautiful, and had touched his artistic nature. He felt real respect for any-one able to discern qualities with such crystalline clearness, and was honestly glad when the opportunity came in which his friendship proved of substantial benefit.

The clerical brother wrote as to her

investments. He was interested in a colonial mining speculation, which would shortly yield fifteen if not twenty per cent., and suggested the advisability of her placing her capital, now giving such a small return, therein. Her income would be more than doubled; he himself had already invested considerably in the venture. She rejoiced at the unexpected prospect of such riches, and mentioned a possible rise of fortune to Mr. Barclay, who, with the keenness of one accustomed to play with investments for amusement, demanded "Why? Where? How? South American mines at Melihala." He staggered her by declaring that they sounded bad. "What was her brother? A clergyman! Worse and worse. Men of the cloth were notorious for being unable to tread safely in the shoals of the City. She must do nothing till she heard from him. He was going to town, and would consult his broker, infinitely to be relied upon." On his return, he gave it against the American mines: "Not to be thought of. A mere bubble. True he had heard of a few things which she might choose, giving a greater yield than what she now held." She hesitated, not liking to go against her brother; but he clenched her hesitation with, "And I am sure you do not want to go against me?" She listened with a feeling of powerlessness to the words: "It is for you to warn your brother. Perhaps you may yet save him from losing his own money. Write and tell him, and if he wishes it I will see him." Strengthened by such advice, she wrote a letter which was an amazement to the Devonshire Parsonage.

The Rev. James showed it to his Agnes. "What could Chatty be about? Who had got hold of her? The idea of her setting up her opinion against his in a matter of business, of which she was absolutely ignorant."

"I call it the greatest impertinence," Agnes cried. "That's the worst of these absurd old maids! One never knows how they'll take things, and she ought to be so grateful to you for thinking of her."

"It is an opportunity which I, as her brother, ought not to allow her to miss,"

replied the husband musing. "I think I must try to see her. I don't quite fancy these Martindales and their friends. When I go up to London I must run down to Brighton to see her. It might be best for her to leave Brighton and come nearer here." To this Agnes gave a doubtful agreement, but was sure that the defiant lady should be brought to reason.

The visit to Brighton came at an inopportune moment. Charlotte, returning from sharing the invalid's airing in the King's Road, found her brother awaiting her, half indignant that his sister should dare to be out, although ignorant of his arrival. From the sitting-room he watched her alight from the carriage, and peered to see if it held other occupants. But the brougham defied his gaze.

"James! What a surprise!" she cried. "Why did you not tell me you were coming?"

"I did not think it needful, for surely there is no time when the visit of a brother should come amiss to a sister." She felt a correction under the smooth remark, and replied stiffly, "I dislike surprises. If you remember, our father did, and I suppose I inherit it. But none the less am I glad to see you. Are you staying long? Where are you?" He explained that he was only paying a flying visit, and she made due enquiries after his home circle. At once he tried to probe the question of her way of life, and that mischievous "friend."

"I was glad to observe you were driving, dear Charlotte. Some kind friend, I suppose. I could not, however, catch sight of her."

"A friend of Louisa's, with whom I often drive," she returned, ringing to order tea as a distraction.

"You seem to know many here. I trust you are a regular attendant at St. J—'s, and see much of my good friends, the Marstons."

"I see them from time to time." Then, in desperation, she broke the dreaded ground for herself: "By the way, James, I should like to say a few words about those mines. I hear that they are most unsafe, and you may lose all you put in." He gaped upon her with astonishment.

"And may I ask who is your informant?"

"Certainly; Mr. Barclay, a rich man, and a very old friend of Louisa's. He has kindly asked his broker—a first-rate man—and he says they are not to be trusted, and I hope you will give them up."

"And do you consider," demanded her brother, with reddening dignity, "that it is seemly conduct in a sister to consult a mere stranger—er—er—as to her brother's private affairs?"

"I asked him for myself, not for you, James."

"Who is this Mr. Barclay? I trust, Charlotte, that you are careful as to whom you visit and know. Are these people residents?"

"He has chambers in town, but is a great deal here for his health, as he is rather an invalid." She steadily looked away, feeling afraid to meet the fraternal eye, and succumb to old habits. Chambers in town so distinctly speak the bachelor. After a few minutes' pause the brother asked, "Do you see much of him? What is his age?"

Charlotte resented the enquiry. "I really don't know. About sixty, I should guess. I meet him very often;" adding, after a pause, "He is very intellectual, and has been most kind to me."

The clergyman was silent, viewing his sister with critical eyes. Was it possible that her mature charms had found an admirer? She looked old—very old for her age; but there was a neatness about her, and an invalid might prize one so well fitted to be nurse as well as wife. He repeated again:

"You say this gentleman is rich." Instinctively she felt he was abandoning the point, and spoke with greater confidence.

"Yes, very wealthy, I believe, and clever in business. Would you like to see him, and hear what he has to say about the mines? He told me he would be delighted to see you." Mr. Milman looked a shade uncomfortable. "No, my dear, I think not. Of course, I will not press you; but, for myself, I have full confidence, and to-day I should scarcely have time."

When, a few months later, he retired from his speculation, relieved of some thousand pounds, he was fain to acknowledge the wisdom of the unseen friend, and felt his tongue tied as to advice concerning the friendship.

For two years life kept a pleasant aspect to Charlotte. She had the excitement of a short visit to London, where she played chaperon to Elsie, and made the acquaintance of a different London to that of her youth. Mr. Barclay being in town, arranged visits to theatres and concerts for his young friend, and Elsie's lover (now openly announced) joining them, gave to the party a feeling of completeness, since each dame had her own special attendant. Often did Chatty murmur to herself: "It is a pleasant world. I trust others have as much as I."

Not many months after their return, Jack, in his last year at Sandhurst, brought news which swept away that pleasant world for Chatty, and left her with nothing but reminiscence.

"Mother, you have heard about poor old Barclay, of course?"

"What do you mean, dear?"

"O Lord! I thought you knew. I met Dr. Reid at Victoria, and he told me. He was at the club, and he was taken suddenly ill, and——"

"Good heavens, Jack! He's not dead?"

"Yes, he is. His heart burst up. Dr. Reid didn't see him, but a lot of other doctors did, and he wasn't ill a minute."

Mrs. Martindale broke into tears at the loss of the early friend, and there followed an interval of anxious consideration—how to obtain any more detailed news, tidings of the funeral, etc. A suitable telegram being written, Elsie, standing near the fireplace, gazing into the coals, declared her wish to take it, rather than trust it to a servant.

"Take it! You! Why, dear, it is pouring with rain," cried the mother.

"I don't care; it won't hurt me. I want to go to the music-shop too; besides, I want to go and tell Miss Milman."

"Chatty? Yes, they had grown to be quite intimate. She'll be grieved. He was really kind to her, poor soul,

and she'll feel for me. Tell her what a blow it is—my oldest friend."

It was not of her mother that Elsie thought, as she entered the tiny sitting-room, and found its owner by the fire, knitting men's socks. Something in the aspect of the trim little figure made her realise the difficulty of her task.

"My darling Elsie! What a kind girl, to come out and see me in all this rain! But are you not wet, my child?"

"Dearest Miss Milman, I wanted to see you. I have something to tell you." Charlotte saw distress in the girl's face.

"Dear child, what is wrong? Is any one ill? Nothing amiss with Hugh, I hope?"

"No, no, they are all right at home, but I have had news—terrible news—for us all."

"What? Tell me quickly, for heaven's sake, my dear."

"Dear, dear Miss Milman, I don't know how to tell you. It is Mr. Barclay"—she felt the little dry hand she held turning cold—"he went to town on Wednesday, you know, and was taken ill at his club, and——"

"Is he dead?" Elsie nodded, and, from lack of words with which to comfort, began to fondle, giving kisses and caresses, and stroking the hair stiffly banded on to the forehead with the application known as "fixature."

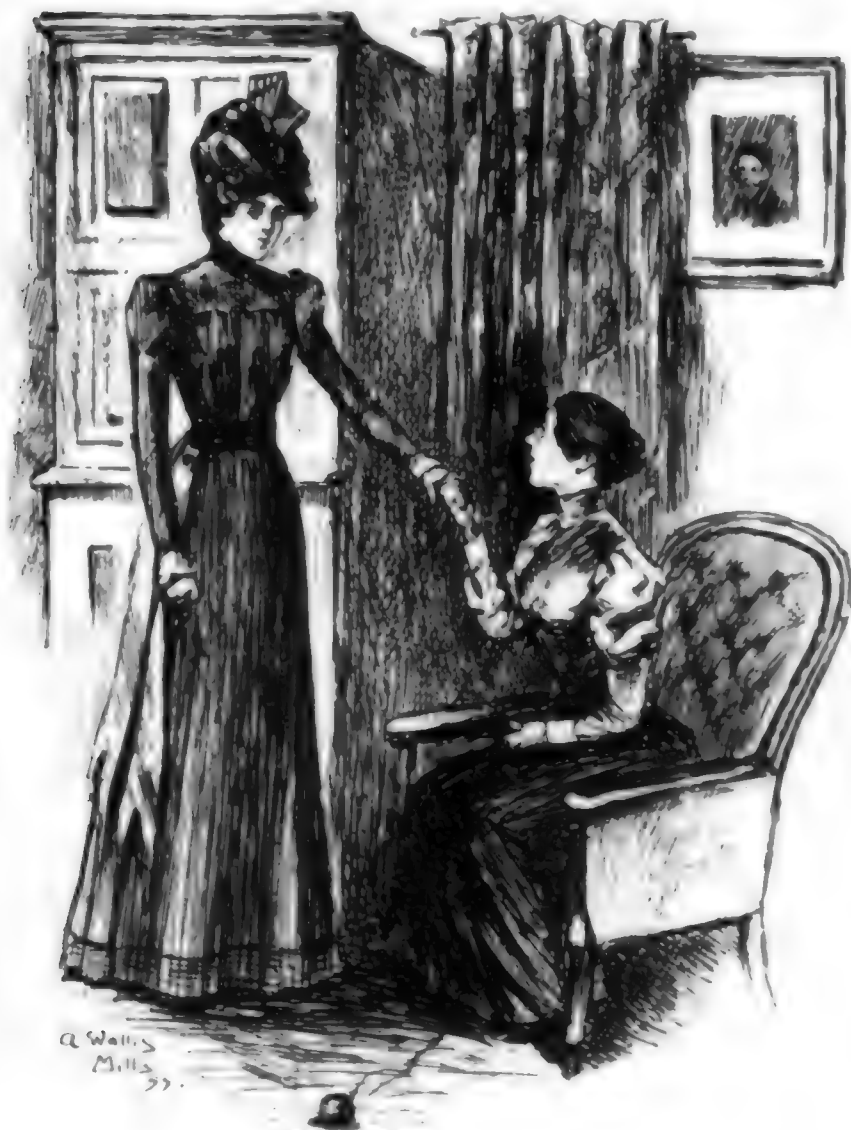
Charlotte received her endearments passively, for the reeling world let her for a moment be only conscious of a vague horror. Then, laying her head on the young shoulder, she gasped out, "Tell me, dear, how do you know?"

"Jack heard it in town. It is quite certain, but we know no details. We have wired, and when we hear will send to you. He had no suffering—was not ill a moment. It was his heart. Mother wants Jack to go to the funeral, and we are going to send a wreath, and I thought perhaps you——"

"Could I send one too? Oh, Elsie, dear, I should like to." The prospect of showing her grief in a tangible form roused the little woman.

"Of course you can. Jack shall take it with ours. May I help you to choose it to-morrow?"

"Or—or, Elsie, darling, could I



"TELL ME QUICKLY FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE"

make it myself? I never have done any, but if I got very good flowers——" The sobs had come, and the tears were falling.

"Certainly you could, and that will be much better. I can show you how to do them. Oh! I am so grieved for it all, I wish I could do something for you."

* * * *

Mrs. Martindale was confirmed in her opinion of the strength of Mr. Barclay's friendship when she was informed of the substantial legacies which, under his will, came to herself, Jack and Elsie. Various little personal possessions of their old friend also arrived at Brighton for distribution among the family;

among them, specially for the godson, Jack, the gold hunting watch with chains, seals, etc., which had always been worn, and brought back vividly the spare bent figure. Mrs. Martindale, declaring she could not bear the sight of them, left the room, and Elsie and her brother turned over the small boxes.

"Poor old Barclay," Jack said, holding up the watch with its dangling pendants, "fancy his remembering to leave me that! It was good of the old chap." Elsie eyed the collection musingly. Then she singled out a piece of green jade hanging to the bunch by a tiny gold chain.

"Jack, I want you to give me that."

"No, Lel, I don't want to divide the

lot—they look so like the poor old boy."

"Yes, but I want to have that very much indeed, just because it does look so like him. Give it me, there's a dear."

"But you don't want to wear it, Lel?"

"No, it's not for myself I want it at all. It's for some one else."

"Whoever do you mean?" She remained silent. "Not Miss Milman?" Elsie nodded. "Did she really take his death to heart? I say, it was rather rough on her that he did not leave her anything—after all that driving about, and having him to tea. He might have left her a legacy."

"Oh, no, she didn't want it, but I'm sure she would awfully like to have something that was his." Jack whistled a tune softly between his teeth, and then began to remove the piece of jade from the watch-chain, remarking, "Fancy!—for an old Johnnie like that!"

"She isn't very young herself."

"No, poor old girl, she isn't a chicken," dividing the little ring with his penknife. "I say, Lel, if the old boy had lived, and his wife had died instead, do you suppose he would have married Miss Milman? Did he want to?"

"Oh, dear, no; I don't think it for a moment. Mother always said that she believed if his wife died he'd go for the best-looking, showiest woman he could get, and that wouldn't be Miss Milman."

"What was he always driving about with her for, then?"

"Only because he hated being alone; and she was never tired of talking to him about himself—and her admiring him so, flattered him. I believe he was the only man she had ever spoken to on her own account. I'm quite sure, from what she's told me, that the last two years are the first good time that she's ever had."

"If you call that a good time," said the brother, contemptuously, handing her the piece of jade on the little chain. "What's the good of worrying about with an old boy like that, and listening to him talking about his inside? and

when the whole thing was only a sham—a good old delusion!"

"Yes, I suppose it was all a delusion, but she got a lot of happiness out of it. Some women don't have anything but delusions in their lives, and some don't even have them. Things aren't paid out evenly. Thanks, dear old boy; and don't tell any of the others, there's a dear. I'll take it to her now."

"Give the old girl my love, and tell her I'm coming down to see her soon."

Charlotte was at home, and received Elsie tenderly. "It is good of you to come to me so often, dear, when you know how sad I am."

"I have brought you something I think you may like to have, dear Miss Milman. You know our friend always wore it. Does it not bring him back?"

Charlotte looked, and then, making no effort to restrain herself, fell weeping, as she took the jade, and pressed it to her lips. "I know he valued it," Elsie went on, "and I thought you might like to have it to hang to your chain."

"Elsie, darling, how did you know? I was just thinking, what would I not give to have something that had belonged to him?—and this he always wore himself. No, I don't want it to be seen. I will have a chain made, and wear it under my dress. Thank you, thank you, you dear, good girl!"

As Elsie walked home, a watery sky with grey clouds, and a moon that gave no light from blurred edges, were overhead. She likened them in her mind to the life of the woman she had left—misty and uneventful, starved and insignificant, and bare of human interest.

But the bit of jade worked like a charm in that poor, starved existence, and soothed the soul of its owner strangely. She continued to live in Brighton, for was it not there she had known him? And after a little time she became glad to mix again in such society as sought her company, and her features gained a look of placid resignation. She was particularly attracted to the society of young people held in the throes of trying love affairs, and over comfortable tea would she evoke confidences, in return for which her

own story was sometimes revealed—a story that had grown into unrecognisable proportions under the influence of the green jade charm, by far the most precious thing she possessed. For was it not brought to her by her dear friend, Mrs. Anstruther (now in India), who had been his confidant as well as hers? Time, and much musing on the past, had added this feature to the shadowy romance. Honour had forbidden a declaration being made to herself, but

dear Elsie had known it all along. Years passing, other details were added, till Elsie, talking to her friend on one of her visits “home,” could scarcely identify Charlotte’s account of her first years at Brighton. Mrs. Anstruther never attempted to clear the lady’s memory. “It is all a delusion,” she said to herself; “but life is made up of delusions, and if they make us happy, why should not we keep them?”



IN AUGUST

THE heather bells are fully blown,
And there's a crispness in the grass :
All secrets of the Spring are known,
All early hopes have come to pass.

There are no more new tales to tell
Of fresh discoveries in flowers,
The earth hides nought that shall excel
The beauties of these August hours.

An endless wonder overhead,
A million marvels at our feet :
What more can now be sung or said
When Summer's joy is so complete ?

Love's road runs on across the year.
To-day we scan the fairest mile :
And it is very sweet and dear
To rest and dream a little while.

And if the pleasures we amass
Must flicker out like Summer's gleam,
My heart shall turn to yours, my lass,
To prove that all was not a dream.

J. J. BELL.

A History of Old-Time Racing:

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN THE LAND OF THE TURF—1709-1733

WRITTEN BY E. ANTHONY. ILLUSTRATED BY HARINGTON BIRD



THE aim of this paper is to convey to present-day readers a picture of the turf as it was in its infancy. How astounding are the changes manifest in the sport since the era I write of! How very entertaining, too, are some of the old forms of horse-racing long since forgotten, but which I propose to revive. To a collection of "Racing Calendars," dating from 1709, I am deeply indebted. They have proved themselves boon companions.

To get to work without further preface, it may be taken for granted that in the majority of races recorded in these early years the distance to be covered seldom varied below or beyond four miles, and as each race consisted of two, three, or four heats, the stamina of the competitors must have been the chief consideration. Apart from this, Mr. Beringer has written that "Races were performed very nearly under the same rules and upon the same principles as at present, and the horses were prepared for running by all the discipline of food, physic, airing, sweats, and clothing, which composes the present system. The weights also which each horse was to carry were rigidly adjusted, the usual weight of the riders being stated at ten stones."

All, or the larger part of the most famous races throughout the kingdom were called bell courses, the prize and reward of the conquering horses being a bell.

The year 1709 claims the first record of racing, which appears in the "Racing Calendar," a three-days' meeting being held at York (on Clifton and Rawcliffe Ings) in September, one race of four

miles being run off each day in heats. The earliest race mentioned is one for a gold cup, value £50, run for on September 13th, 1709, for six-year-old horses. According to the then rules of racing, the horse which had won the first and second heats was obliged to start for a third, and to save his distance to entitle him to a prize. The fields, I may add, very occasionally reached double figures. A foot-note to a race for a plate of £10, run for on Thursday, September 15th, introduces the first dead-heat on record. The third heat resulted in a dead-heat between Button and Milkmaid, each of whom had accounted for one of the two previous heats, but the riders, being guilty of foul play in running, and afterwards fighting on horseback, the plate was awarded to Mr. Graham, the owner of the third horse (Brisk), who had run second on both occasions.

During the next few years there is much the same amount of racing reported, and the value of the cups never exceeded one hundred guineas. Hereabouts Mr. Childers was certainly the most successful owner, but the success of his mare Duchess in Her Majesty's Gold Cup, run for on July 28th, 1714, was disputed. It appears that the riders of Duchess and Foxhunter, having been guilty of foul riding in the third heat, it was agreed that they should run again. Duchess won, but Mr. Peirson, the owner of Foxhunter, still claiming the prize, a law suit followed, and it was decided by the Court that all the horses which were not distanced had an equal right to the prize. The proprietors of the four horses sold their shares for twenty-five



"THE FIRST DEAD HEAT ON RECORD"

guineas each, two of which were purchased by the Duke of Rutland, one by the Earl of Carlisle, and the other by Sir William Lowther, who agreed that the plate should be run for again in the year 1719, when, on reference, I see Lord Carlisle's Buckhunter carried it off. The year 1714 was also memorable for the success of her Majesty Queen Anne's Star, afterwards Jacob,

who won a Plate of £40 on Friday, July 30th. The news of Queen Anne's death reached the course during racing at York on the following Monday, upon which the attendance, which was remarkable for the numerous nobility and gentry present, left the course and attended the Lord Mayor and Archbishop Dawes, who proclaimed George I. King. Such was the concourse that

attended these races that 150 coaches were at one time on the course.

No mention is made of Newmarket in the Calendar until the year 1718, although other authorities instruct us that Charles II. set the fashion of two meetings at Newmarket, and we know his reign dated from 1660 to 1685.

The odds at which competitors started are not quoted, but that there was plenty of betting is evidenced by reading of a race run in 1718, that high odds were laid on Crutches, who was leading near the distance-post, when his rider, Thomas Duck, intentionally threw himself off. The horse won the heat notwithstanding, but was deemed distanced by not bringing in his weight—hard luck this, for the backers of Crutches. Although we are not told the fate of Thomas Duck, we can well understand that it was not to be envied.

The outcry against Monday racing had evidently not been raised at this date, for that day bore more than its fair share of work. Newmarket, here-

abouts was chiefly associated with matches, a form of amusement unknown in Yorkshire. The stakes were usually 100 gs., 200 gs., or any higher amount not exceeding 500 gs., and in quite half the matches forfeit was paid. The distance seems never to have fallen short of four miles, whilst occasionally it extended to six. What have present-day race-goers to say to this? Sometimes they must surely tire of the almost unceasing five-furlong and six-furlong scrambles, which are so often won and lost in the start, and sigh for the good old days of long-distance races.

At Hambledon, in Yorkshire, Saturday, August 8th, 1719, must have been a red-letter day. His Majesty's Gold Cup, value 100 gs., for five-year-old mares, was run for, and out of the thirty-six mares entered, thirty-one started. Remarks on the race in question assert that there was no instance on record of so large a number of horses having started for a race, which renders it all the more remarkable that the prize was won



"THOMAS DUCK THROWS HIMSELF OFF"

by a mare, Bonny Black, who was a year younger than all the rest. Peculiarly remarkable, too, was the large field, considering the conditions expressly state "for five-year-old mares." Though by far the best runner of her time, Bonny Black did not prove a good brood mare, not one of her descendants having distinguished himself on the Turf. But it does not appear that she was ever covered by any other stallion than the Cyprus Arabian, which might explain the matter. A challenge by her owner to run her against any animal in the kingdom four times over the round course at Newmarket was not accepted.

Of the majority of owners on the turf about this period but little is known. They certainly conferred a benefit upon this country by the importation of Eastern horses. However, we cannot entirely pass over the name of Tregowell Frampton, of Moreton, Dorsetshire, who was keeper of the running-horses at Newmarket to their Majesties William III., Queen Anne, George I., and George II. The writer of the chapter on the history of horse-racing, in the well-known Badminton Library series, tells us of Mr. Frampton that "he was styled for a great number of years 'the Father of the Turf.' He died on March 12th, 1727, aged 86, and was buried at Newmarket." It is reported that Mr. Frampton's horses took part in a large number of races and matches, over which he won and lost great sums. One of these matches—I might call it the most important match of the day, as it has been asserted that there was more money betted on the event than was ever before known—was between a favourite horse of Mr. Frampton's, and Sir William Strickland's Mervyn. The latter won by a little more than a length, but, in consequence of several gentlemen being ruined by the event, a law was subsequently passed against the recovery of any sum of money exceeding £10, betted or laid between any parties.

Other patriarchs whose names are worthy of notice are, Mr. Childers, the breeder of Flying or Devonshire Childers; Mr. Curwin, the importer of the Curwin Bay Barb and the Thoulouse Barb; Mr. Darley, the importer of the Arabian called by his name; and Mr.

Darcy, who brought over to England the horses known in the Stud Book by the names of Darcy's White and Yellow Turks.

No reference to the Turf of this date would be complete without some mention of such bygone giants as the Darley Arabian, Flying Childers, and the Godolphin Barb, and I have to thank Mr. Theo. Taunton's work of "Famous Horses" for my facts concerning their careers. The Darley Arabian, foaled about March, 1702, was a bay horse, some fifteen hands high, descended from the race most esteemed amongst the Arabs. He was the property of John Brewster Darley, Esq., of Aldby Park, near York, whose brother, member of a hunting club at Aleppo, secured the horse for a very moderate sum, and sent him to England about the end of 1705. The Darley Arabian was sire of the celebrated Flying Childers, and his present day descendants, through Eclipse, far exceed in number those of the Godolphin Arabian or Byerley Turk; a fact difficult to account for, as there is no doubt that the Byerley Turk, through Herod and Highflyer, held, at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, a higher place in the esteem of breeders than did the race of Eclipse; and the Godolphin Arabian, again, was at one time the most successful of all.

Flying Childers, a bay son of the Darley Arabian—Betty Leedes by Old Careless (son of Spanker)—sister to Leedes by the Leedes Arabian—a daughter of Spanker—the old Morocco Mare, which mare was also the dam of Spanker, was bred by Leonard Childers, Esq., of Carr House, near Doncaster, in 1715, and sold when young to the Duke of Devonshire. Flying Childers was a galloway, about fourteen hands and a half in height; and was what we call a close-made horse, short-backed and compact, whose reach lay altogether in his limbs. Eclipse, on the other hand, was the reverse of this, having great length of waist, and standing over considerable ground. If anatomical structure has anything to do with speed; then, looking at their respective frames, it is evident that, at weight for age over a mile course,

Eclipse must have beaten Childers. Flying Childers in his earlier days was employed to carry the letter-bag backwards and forwards between the Hall and Doncaster. On the road he beat everything that opposed him; and, subsequently on the Turf, the best that England could bring against him. He was never beaten; though it must be added that he ran on five occasions only, and of these, but two were officially reported. The best horses in his day seldom ran more than five or six times, there being scarcely any plates of note, except Royal plates, and very few sweepstakes or matches made, except at Newmarket, until about the year 1760. In his race with Almanzor and Brown Betty over the Round Course at Newmarket, Flying Childers (9st. 2lb.) was timed by the Dukes of Devonshire and Rutland to have moved as much as 82½ feet in a second of time, which is at the rate of close upon a mile a minute. Flying Childers proved a very valuable stallion, though he covered but few mares besides those of the Duke of Devonshire. He died in 1741. The immense number of inn signs and portraits still extant all tend to show the immense popularity of the great son of the Darley Arabian.

The Godolphin Barb (also known as the Godolphin Arabian),—foaled in 1724—was a brown, standing about fifteen hands. His points more resembled those of the highest breed of Barbs, though he was for a long time looked upon as an Arabian. His pedigree was never made public. It is generally supposed that he was imported into England from Barbary; and there is reason to believe that he was sent as a present from the Emperor of Morocco to Louis XIV. Believed to have been stolen and taken to Paris, he is said to have been purchased by a Mr. Coke for £3 from the owner of a water-cart in that city. His new owner gave him to Mr. Roger Williams, by whom he was presented to the Earl of Godolphin, in whose possession he remained as a private stallion until his death, which took place under the shadow of the Gog-Magog Hills in 1753. A plain flat stone, in a covered passage leading to his stable, marks his grave. It is stated

that, after he had accidentally flattened out his favourite cat, for which he had an extraordinary affection, he pined from remorse, and savaged every other cat that came near him. The Sire list eight years after his death contained at least fifteen of his sons, one of which, the "Gower Stallion," is described as having "bone enough to carry eighteen stone a-hunting." Lath, one of the finest horses of his day, and said to have been the best that appeared at Newmarket for many years previous to his time, Childers only excepted, was the first of his get. The Godolphin Arabian was also sire of Cade (who was sire of the celebrated Match'em), Regulus, Blank, Babraham, Bajazet, Old England, and many other noted animals. At his interment cake and ale were distributed to those present.

Following the season of 1717, the number of races held each year increased amazingly, and the fields also showed a goodly advance in their numbers. The result was that ten years later the first annual volume of Mr. Cheney's Racing Calendar was issued, but Messrs. Weatherby, in the works before my notice, only extracted from Mr. Cheney's Calendars in this, as in subsequent numbers, such races as were likely to be interesting, either from the celebrity of the horses engaged, or their descendants, or from the explanation they afford of the modes of conducting horse-racing at different periods. Additions were also made from other sources, and in the meantime no fewer than sixty-two racecourses sprang into repute.

The Wallasey Stakes, of 20 gs. each, was at this time the richest prize in the kingdom, and was established in the following manner:—"The Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Bridgewater, the Earl of Derby, Lord Gower, Lord Molyneux, Lord Barrymore, Sir Richard Grosvenor, Mr. Watkins Williams Wynn, Mr. Egerton, Mr. Cholmondeley, and Mr. Buckle Mackworth engaged to subscribe 20 gs. a year, for ten successive years, commencing in 1723, to be run for on the course at Wallasey on the first Thursday in May in each year, by five-year-old horses, the property of the subscribers,

carrying 10 st. four miles, with the further condition that for the last five years of the period every horse starting must have been bred by the proprietor." Sir Richard Grosvenor met with the greatest share of success in this important race.

It is noticeable that from the earliest days, a number of the races were only open to galloways, the Weasel being, perhaps, the most noted, she winning a great number of galloway plates about the year 1729.

In August of 1730, the course on Clifton and Rawcliffe Ings was overflowed by the river Ouse, in consequence of the excessive rains, with the result that it was determined that the races should in future years be run upon Knavesmire. A Plate of £30 value, for such horses as were not more than three lunar months over five years old, two-mile heats, was run for in June of the following year, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, with this remarkable condition, that, if three horses each win a heat, that which wins the third heat is entitled to the prize, without starting for the fourth. As was but to be expected, the race went to the winner of the third heat, who had previously not at all hurried himself, coming in seventh in the one and fifth in the other.

Occasionally, sporting matches of another character are recorded in the Calendar. For instance, at Newmarket, in 1730, Mr. Roger Williams' Whipper-snapper ran five times round the four-mile course within the hour, carrying a feather, for a wager of twenty guineas. Then the bare tidings are handed down to posterity that Mr. Phillips won the foot match against Mr. Bray, four miles, 100 guineas, and in the succeeding year to this, Thomas Butler, running footman to the Earl of Sunderland, walked six miles and four hundred yards within the hour, for 50 guineas, demonstrating that he could walk as well as run.

Very peculiar conditions also governed some of the races. For instance, the Ladies' Plate, run on July 6th, 1731, at Nottingham, was thrown open only to "such hunters as had been at the death of ten brace of hares and one brace of

foxes in the preceding season, had not been in the sweats from the 1st of November to the last day of March, and had not won a plate since the 1st of October last; to be ridden by such gentlemen as never rode among grooms."

And it was on September 30th of the same year that a scale of weight for age was inaugurated in a race at Grantham, the distance, presumably, being four miles:—"A Whim, or Whimsical Plate of £20 value, gift of Sir M. Newton, Member for the Borough, for four years-old, 8st.; five, 8st. 11lb., and aged, 10st., the horse that wins the first heat winning the plate, and the others to start for the entrance money." The winner (Molly) was a five-year-old. And on the following day, at Bedale, there appears to be the first Plate given for three-year-olds. Bonny Black ran a match at that age, and it is not impossible that others may have done the same; but no Sweepstakes or Plate confined to three-year-old horses is to be met with before.

A most peculiar race was that run at Oxford, in 1732. "The first was a dead-heat between Conqueror and Merry Tom. In running the third heat Conqueror and John Trot fell, just at, or very near, the winning post, which gave rise to the question whether either of them had supported his weight past the post, or whether the heat should be given to Merry Tom, who was third. It was agreed to refer the dispute to the next day's Ordinary, when it was decided in favour of John Trot, upon a person's making affidavit that before he fell his weight, at least, had passed the ending post." What had the judge to say to this decision? Surely he must have been in the best position to see. Only imagine such an adjudication now-a-days!

A race at Durham in 1733, is also noteworthy, as showing the number of persons who occasionally sat in the chair. The first heat was such a near thing that three out of the six tryers in the chair gave it in favour of one horse, and three in favour of another, it being, after some disputing, declared to be a dead heat.

And now one more instance of old-



CONQUEROR AND JOHN TROTT FALL AT THE WINNING POST

time racing, and I have done. At Leicester, the same year, a purse of 40 gs. was run, for which started the Duke of Ancaster's Gentleman, Lord Lindsey's Silversides, and Mr. Cole's Foxhunter. The articles relating to this prize prohibit two horses being entered by one and the same person, or that belonged to the same person; and it being surmised that Gentleman and Silversides were both the property of His Grace of Ancaster, the same occasioned a dispute at the time of entrance. But the objection was so far satisfactorily answered, that both horses were permitted to enter, and, in consequence thereof, appeared at the proper time to start. It was urged at Leicester that both started in their clothes and shoes, and the riders in their clothes also, at which the people on the spot took offence, raised a mutiny upon the

horses, and not only prevented their completing even one heat, but committed great violence, both upon the horse called Gentleman and his rider. But as it is rare that redress is recoverable from a mob, so I have not heard that His Grace did anything more than demand the prize, which was denied him—the Town, since no heat was completed, resolving not to give it up, unless compelled by an action at law.

It is such scenes as these which mark the yawning gulf between horse-racing of to-day and horse-racing nearly two hundred years back; and whatever be one's feelings towards the sport, one must admit that the laws of racing no longer lie open to ridicule.

Steeplechasing can only be traced back as far as the year 1752, and it finds, therefore, no place in these records.





HONG-KONG

China: Past and Present

WRITTEN BY GODFREY BOSVILLE. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS.

CHINA—IN THE PAST.

TO borrow a Gilbertian phrase, the average Chinaman's lot "is not a happy one." Nor can this be wondered at. For countless generations every Government in turn has been hopelessly corrupt. Yes, rotten to the core.

The wretched soldiers are now, as formerly, very much underfed, and shockingly badly paid. Many regiments are still armed with bows and arrows. Others have weapons like the billhooks of Jack Cade's time, spears, or old-fashioned muzzle-loaders that have been "made in Germany."

The standard of efficiency is on these lines: A mark must be hit with an arrow, halfway up a narrow trench, the bow to be pulled from horseback. The would-be officer must also be capable of lifting a heavy weight.

At Soochow you can see the rifle-range, about a hundred yards—"the more noise the merrier"—and a little further inside the city, the old camp and parade ground, with the "trench" for riding in.

By the way, no decent Chinaman "goes for a soldier," if he can avoid doing so, because it is regarded as a low-caste job.

Yet imagine what might take place if these yellow-faced people were properly drilled and well officered. Think of the change for the better, supposing a strong Government with pure legislation, succeeded the present weak one, and if the avaricious mandarins were abolished, cotton industries opened up, and rich coalfields worked. Ah, then indeed would Eastern civilisation be progressing. For all we know to the contrary, a wise Providence may be indefinitely postponing these events. Certainly, if Lord Rosebery's prophecy comes true, the next European war will be fought for commercial supremacy. Consequently, the partition, or the bolstering up, of the Chinese Empire deeply concerns the English nation.

Quite apart from China being the Tom Tiddler's ground of European politics, it is interesting in many ways. Its history can be traced back as far as two thousand years before Christ. Between then and now, dynasties have been overthrown, emperors assassinated in quick succession, and, unfortunately, valuable records purposely burnt. Despite these changes, the money-grubbing "heathen Chinese" has probably altered but little, either in manners or customs, since the Hia

dynasty ruled over his long-suffering ancestors, which was between 2207 B.C. and 1767 B.C.

It is only fair to mention that several of their emperors had the welfare of their subjects at heart. However, they were a queer lot, taken as a whole.

Here are a few choice specimens of them. "During the reign of Ching, who was the second emperor of the Fourth Dynasty, B.C. 286, called Tsin, or Cino, the Great Wall was built. Being elated with his own exploits, he formed a design of making posterity believe that he was the first Chinese emperor that ever sat on the throne, and for this purpose he ordered all the historical books which contained the fundamental records and laws of the ancient Governments to be burnt, and four hundred of the learned to be put to death, for having attempted to save some of the proscribed documents."

The Fifth Dynasty was founded by the chief of a banditti, named Lieupang, B.C. 207. This adventurer, if Chinese historians can be believed, proved himself worthy of the throne.

Another very different monarch was the last of the Tenth Dynasty, "who attached himself to the religion of Fo, and while his attention was absorbed in the mysteries taught by his disciples, his prime minister attacked him in his capital. At length the monarch awoke from his religious reveries, took up arms, marched round the ramparts, examined the position of the enemy, and exclaimed, 'All is lost. It is over with the sciences.' He then set fire to the library, which consisted of 140,000 volumes, and surrendered to the conqueror, who immediately put him to death."

Let us give one more passage. "In 617 A.D., Si Guen dethroned the previous emperor, and the usurper's son, on arriving at the Imperial Palace, was astonished at its magnificence, and said: 'No; such a stately edifice must not be suffered to stand any longer, as it is good for nothing but to corrupt the heart of a prince and render him effeminate.' After this, he promptly ordered the handsome building to be set alight, and it was quickly reduced to ashes.

The history of China, puts us in mind

of one of Carlyle's statements. "As for the external form and forms of life, what can we say, except that out of the eater there comes strength, out of the unwise there comes not wisdom."

Chinese libraries have been burnt ages ago, but unhappily Chinese "shams," remain to this day, such as the well-meaning puppet emperor, and the hideous mandarin frauds.

In 923 A.D. block-printing was invented, and in 1279 A.D. the first Tartar prince reigned over the empire, and "effectually reconciled them to his government, and even endeared himself to them by observing their ancient laws and customs, by his equity and justice."

A still more important epoch was the great revolution, in 1644 A.D. The Tartar dynasty, just mentioned, had been overthrown: yet there was an alarming disturbance throughout the empire. The Chinese nobles then, must have been much simpler than they are now; because they foolishly asked the Manchew, or Eastern Tartars, to assist them. Help was gladly given, but not on the terms which had been expected. The confiding Chinese, were unreasonably surprised, when one of their Eastern Tartar allies, insisted upon crowning himself—much in the same way as William the Conqueror became King of England, in direct opposition to the wish of the badly disciplined Saxons.

In vain did the Chinese princes make brave attempts to dethrone Shun-chi, the first Manchew emperor. They were no match for him, and were beaten in every engagement. The diplomatic Shun-chi then taught his subjects to love as well as to fear him.

Nevertheless, we have a faint suspicion, that they must have feared him far more than they ever loved him?

Surely, if a hesitating Chinaman entertained a doubt as to which sentiment predominated, the royal torturer ingeniously solved the difficulty for him! Very likely the doubter's eyelids were slashed off; the poor aching eye-balls being exposed to a tropical glare, and the wretched fellow soundly beaten with a bamboo. Or he may have been bound securely, and promptly hurled into the nearest ant-hill, to die a cruelly lingering death. As nearly all Chinese, and indeed

Europeans too, can testify, to catch a Tartar, or rather be caught by one, is no child's play. On the contrary, it is the personification of cruelty.

CHINA—IN THE PRESENT.

Let us turn now to the hopelessly corrupt mandarins of the present day, viewed from the "foreign devil's" way of looking at things. The following is the curious system of government, or rather misgovernment, in hapless China, an iniquitous state of bribery and corruption, which is the accumulated growth of centuries.

An official desiring a Tao-Tai-ship or Governorship of a Chinese province, makes a bid to the central Government, for the post. He offers, say, 300,000 taels—a tael is 2s. 8d. at the present rate of exchange. Needless to say, a great deal of bargaining takes place between those in authority at Peking and the would-be purchaser. At last the mandarin is installed, but has a further sum of money of, say, 100,000 taels, to pay yearly. This revenue has

to be sweated out of those who are his vassals.

After this business transaction, the central Government, metaphorically speaking, wash their hands of any further responsibility, and the mandarin, wicked or virtuous, rules supreme. Or we will say, is left to his own devices.

He usually grinds down all who are under him, and has an excellent time of it; makes his fortune, and is eventually removed, by more bribery, to a higher post, after a three years' term of office.

Now this is why rebellions are chronic (the Taiping, which General Gordon firmly put down, is a huge example), because the central Government find a difficulty in quelling disorders a thousand miles from Peking. Further, it is the reason why the hypothecation of some of the "internal liking" to the Hong Kong Bank was so bitterly fought by the officials. The central Government were coolly giving as security that which was not theirs to hypothecate.

The future of the Chinese Empire no man can foresee. In all likelihood the



HONG-KONG BACKCOURSE

tour which Lord Charles Beresford has just made will enlighten English Statesmen about the Yang-tse-Kiang Valley, a densely populated district, with the hardest working and most frugal people in the world. If only railways were made there, and proper security given to life and property, that part of China would develop in a marvellous way.

English troops have at last completely routed the Kalifa; and yet slavery goes on, and the mandarins remain undisturbed; but have we a mission to reform all dwellers on the globe who need reforming? Must we abolish the present system of government bribery and corruption, and then govern a portion of China in the same way that we control Egypt?

To answer such momentous questions entails a wide knowledge of Indian and Colonial finance; so many big interests are at stake. However, "Nothing venture, nothing have," so let us boldly confront the difficulties which pour in on all sides. To begin with, there is the mandarin question. How are we to dispose of that? Obviously it would not be right to allow a Chinese gentleman to purchase the privilege of grinding down his fellow-countrymen, and then take away his means of livelihood.

Supposing we decide upon getting rid of him, we are in duty bound to return him the money which he originally laid out, in order to purchase the mandarin billet. Really you can see Chinese things from all sorts of different stand-points, and through different tinted spectacles. Therefore it behoves the "conscientious objector" to look through spectacles having the right focus.

Granted we take upon our shoulders the heavy responsibility of developing the mineral wealth of China, will not our coal and iron owners raise powerful objections? Surely we are near the mark in declaring that business men "at home" are nervous at the idea of opening up China under a British Protectorate, in case English industries suffer! Certainly it might tend to revolutionise our iron and coal trade, and injure the business of Indian cotton mills.

The political economist will vehem-

ently declare that everything finds its proper level, governed by the law of supply and demand. A nice theory, which does not always work out as comfortably as might be desired. Nevertheless, "supply and demand" are stubborn facts, and will help to bear out Lord Rosebery's prophecy.

How does the ordinary Chinaman like a Dowager Empress, and an almost phantom Emperor, a Li Hung Chang, unruly generals, and mandarins who receive large sums of money for the purpose of paying troops that do not exist? This money, by the way, goes into the mandarin's pocket, and he does not keep so many soldiers as he ought to.

The average Chinaman does not like the present system; but he fears a change, and loathes, nay, he actually has the audacity to despise the "foreign devil," who wishes to open up his country.

What an unreasonable mind then the "heathen Chinese" must have! Perhaps so. Yet we must remember that, much as the downtrodden natives resent the existing tyranny, and exclaim "Oh mandarin, he wanchee squeeze *all* the time," they would give their ears, and everything except their beloved pigtails, for one of their family to become a mandarin. Because, if he got on through bribery, many "fat jobs" would be given to his kith and kin during his lifetime.

No European can understand the peculiarities of the Chinese without possessing more than a smattering of the doctrines taught by Confucius. That sage was born 551 B.C., and died 475 B.C., leaving behind him a reputation for pure-mindedness that has only been surpassed by the Founder of Christianity.

To give a clear outline of Confucianism is an appalling undertaking; but the wise man and his sayings and writings are inseparable. It is enough, without going deeply into the subject, to state that Confucius was a Chinese Plato, who was of princely blood. His parents, however, had come down in the world, and were not related to the ruling dynasty.

Apparently the sage was not anxious to usurp the throne. He simply wished

to be left alone and allowed to keep good. Seemingly his ambition was to make those whom he came into contact with delightfully pure also. Naturally, the corrupt Chinese statesmen were hopelessly puzzled, and could not make head or tail of Confucius, but only knew the people loved him, and were influenced by his teachings.

The following sayings will show what manner of man he was: "What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others."

Again, his notion of wisdom was:

was made Governor of a large province. The inhabitants there had been wicked for centuries, but Confucius earnestly took them in hand, and soon made them nearly as virtuous as himself. His almost supernatural piety aroused the suspicions of a wicked marquis, who finally brought about his downfall.

We grieve to add that the founder of the most popular religion in China was latterly a disappointed man. He advocated implicit obedience to good emperors, and the overthrow of bad rulers, yet loved peace.



EXAMINATION HALL IN CANTON

"To give oneself earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them—that may be called true wisdom."

Confucius was a collector of Chinese ballads; some he made, and others he edited. Amongst other literary works, he was responsible for a wilfully inaccurate history; also many sayings. All these were reverently kept by his numerous disciples, after their teacher had died a natural death. At one time he

Honesty, domestic felicity, chastity, disinterestedness in this world, etc., and many other inestimable virtues were held up by him as the national standard of excellence. The future life he very rarely touched upon. He believed implicitly that Chinese rulers before his day were persons to be revered like gods, and therefore laid unnecessary stress upon how good they were; just as our modern artists admire "old masters," and sometimes overrate them.

There never existed a more incomprehensible national schoolmaster or open-air preacher than Confucius; because he was three-quarters a saint—yet never pretended to divine sanctity—and was one-quarter a philosopher, and a wilfully inaccurate historian, as we mentioned before. Despite these inconsistencies, Confucius has for two thousand years had more respect paid to his memory than any Chinaman who lived before him or since. His sayings, and they were legion, have been added to.

Confucianism in China is what Christianity is in Europe, what Moham-medanism is in Turkey and India. Surely not a religion to be scoffed at! Yet we hardly like to term it a religion—say, rather, the treasured utterances of a Chinese sage, who was not unlike an ancient Herbert Spencer.

It seems never to have occurred to Confucius that women could be educated, and also join in manly amusements. Perhaps this was because he lived two thousand years ago—before Li Hung Chang's recent visit to Europe. And so he never dreamed of divided skirts, universities for the fair sex, or anticipated ladies going to race meetings, betting, "biking," or smoking cigarettes. We feel sure that he would have disapproved of "the New Woman" in Western civilisation.

In China, Government posts are given to successful candidates who have obtained the highest number of marks in essays on Confucianism and other ancient books, at competitive examinations, open to all. Apart from these examinations, a good billet is often got through bribery.

Space will not allow us to give a full description of Chinese scenery; one might just as well try to explain what the whole of Europe is like, in a few lines. We will therefore confine ourselves to the Yang-tse Valley, and its "Treaty Ports."

For miles round Shanghai, the country is uninteresting—a vast alluvial plain, with small granite hills rising up here and there. The sea at the mouth of the Yang-tse is well named the Yellow Sea. Any passenger who wants a clean tub a day or two before reaching land must tell his steward to fill a

bath before the steamer ploughs through the discoloured water that washes the Chinese coast. On approaching Chinkiang, the first "Treaty Port," you begin to see high land. At one time this place was expected to be the future emporium of trade, like Shanghai is now. Then come Brit and Am (consulates), where a fair amount of business is done. Further on is Nanking, the old capital of China, protected by the Kiang-Yin Forts, armed with heavy modern guns, and under foreign officers. The seat of Vice-regal Government is here. The country round Nanking is remarkably flat, but high mountains can be seen in the distance.

Woo-hoo, the next "Treaty Port," is a place much frequented by sportsmen, on account of the excellent pheasant shooting to be got there. The "Concession" is built on small eminences, close to the river. The country is undulating, gradually rising into hills on nearing the horizon. These hills are occasionally cut through by the constantly winding Yang-tse. The celebrated "Little Orphan" is a perpendicular rock which rises out of the river-bed in a most picturesque spot. On the top of this rocky island is a quaint Buddhist temple.

Kew-Kiang is the next "Treaty Port." On a range of mountains, not far from the town, are some charming bungalows. The residents visit these country houses during the trying hot weather.

Han-Kow is another "Treaty Port." Opposite is the large native city of Wo-Chang, having a fort and arsenal. The surrounding country is nearly level, except for the Han-Yang hill, on which is a large pagoda. Most lovely excursions are made from here, up the Han river. Beautiful lakes and hills, covered with azaleas, wild oranges, wisteria, mauve and white clematis, as well as dog and moss roses, make this part of China like a glimpse into Arcadia. Laburnum, wild violets, lilac and jasmine are also found in profusion.

Enthusiastic artists who have seen the district round the "Treaty Port" of Ichang would give much to reproduce its pretty gorges. Here the mighty Yang-tse has cut a course for

itself through a lofty mountain range, and formed a succession of rapids and whirlpools.

Navigation up to Choong-King is exceedingly dangerous, but has been accomplished by the indomitable Mr. Archibald Little in a small steamer.

The mixed court at Shanghai is an unique institution. It is composed of a mandarin appointed by the Chinese authorities, and a foreign consular official. Whenever a Chinaman living in the "Concession" is caught breaking the law, he is taken into custody by the police, and afterwards brought up for judgment before the mixed court. Grave scandals are painfully common in connection with this very unsatisfactory tribunal. A Chinaman

who has been acquitted by the mixed court is often recaptured by a mandarin's "runners."

Despite the wise and therefore humane teachings of the amiable Confucius, the "heathen Chinese" in authority squeezes his fellow-countrymen unmercifully. The victim now and then dies from starvation, or is tortured to death. In fact, a long residence in this unenlightened empire reveals the full meaning of the text, "Delivered to the tormentor until he shall have paid the uttermost farthing." Let us fervently hope that at the beginning of the twentieth century, Western civilisation will dawn upon the patient toilers in the fertile Yang-tse valley.



SHANGHAI HARBOUR



A STORY OF ITALY

WRITTEN BY ANNABEL GRAY. Author of "Jerome," "Comrades," "Forbidden Banns," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY SPENCER BLYTH.

GIOVANNI PELLINI and Clarice, his only daughter, had lived together, with none between them, ever since his wife Maddalena had forsaken them, ever since Clarice, a little strong-limbed mite of six, with golden hair and the eyes of one of Raphael's angels, had been strained to her father's breast, his sole remaining treasure. Maddalena had left her husband and child for a former lover, a rich man, an engineer from Auvergne and a patron of her husband, who had come from France to Italy, to assist in the construction of a railway near the village where Pellini lived. "I have ever loved thee, Maddalena," he had whispered, beneath the lilacs along the old mule path by the cypress grove. "Poverty is falling on Pellini; he too is jealous, begrudges thee luxury and pleasure. Come with me then to France, escape want and misery, begin a new life in which money will soften the bitterness of loss." And Maddalena had listened and smiled, loving him for his dark strength and beauty, his wealth

and power to command. She was a selfish, coarse woman, callous to all and everything but her own comfort. And one night when the moon silvered the olive-groves and cherry-orchards, she passed along the pathway by the old hills with him, without a tear for the deserted husband and the little fair-haired angel she called daughter.

At first in his misery on finding himself forsaken, Giovanni had resolved on self-destruction, then he gave himself up to grief and brooding. The black-browed termagant, with the features of a Greek goddess, and the wavy ebon hair, had been so dear to his simple poet's heart. And now disgrace and pain had come—surely he must be revenged. Only he remembered the clasp of his little daughter's arms about his neck, and her kisses when she ran to the door to meet him as he came home from work, and that Clarice would be ten times more desolate without him. So he had hushed her childish sobs on learning that "mama" had gone away, and pillowed her golden head on his breast as she sank into troubled slumbers. God had left him Clarice; they

would both love and cling to each other while they lived. And in the sweet rest and warmth of his embrace, in the shelter of those fatherly arms, as he swore to love her through all eternity, the child felt soothed and comforted. "Mama" had sometimes beaten her and been cross, but her father would always protect and stay with her.

And so in time her father became everything to her; playmate, comrade, confessor, friend. Her beautiful violet eyes glistened with joy as she waited for his approach. Sometimes she would run and meet him along the old broken path, and he would bring toys, or sweets out of his pockets, and Clarice would scream with joy, as the wind lifted and played with her hair while she danced along by his side. "I do love you, father," she used to say gravely on Sundays, as they returned together from chapel. "You let me ask my little friends to tea, and buy me pretty frocks, and make me learn painting and music, which you can so ill afford. Ah! dearest, I will repay you all one day."

And then Giovanni's face would lose its blanched look of pain, and he would cease to think of his vengeance against those two who had betrayed him. Had he not Clarice?

But all this was in the sweet long ago, when his darling was a child, and gathered flowers to deck their little rooms with; when her beauty, grace and merriment had charmed everyone who viewed them, and at last brought many lovers to her feet.

Alas! a greater sorrow than the one that had fallen on Pellini in his daughter's childhood had now overtaken him. For his Clarice was awaiting her trial for murder, lying yonder, in the shadow of the great white prison where the Assizes were held, about four miles from her village home. And he was all alone now, he *must* be all alone until the end—until they killed Clarice. All the neighbours declared she must be executed, all except the little wise old woman at the mill, who told fortunes by the cards and was an extraordinary clairvoyante. And, oh! the times he visited her now, and the francs she raked in! Always the same story—no sudden

or speedy death for his darling—and Giovanni would murmur, "God bless you, Widow Rocca, for your good cheer; your words alone keep life in me."

Gaunt and terrible looked Giovanni; people whispered he was losing his senses from grief and waiting. Of course she would be condemned to death, whispered the neighbours among themselves. Had she not stabbed a man, a worthless treacherous lover, to the heart, in a sudden frenzy of hatred, and had she not confessed her guilt? The deed had been carried out by the aid of a small Chinese dagger, the gift, it would appear, of a former suitor who had found no favour in her eyes.

Pellini went up this morning into his daughter's deserted room and leant his face on the pillow so many nights now unpressed by her beloved head. He recollected the words of David Strauss: "We are imprisoned in a world of mechanism, impotent ourselves to control or direct the forces that in a moment may tear and mangle us; the huge hammer, the rolling wheels, the pulleys and the cords have got us in their power, *and what can we do?*" He kissed her pillow, his tears fell over it, words could not assist him here. Then he lifted some ribbons on her dressing-table, and passed his hand over her gowns and the little straw hat, hanging from pegs on the door. There was that blue dress she had worn on her birthday, his favourite. They were all that were left to remind him that she lived.

"My darling—oh, my darling!" he moaned, rocking himself to and fro. "Why did you do it? Will they be merciless—and kill you? The man had struck and robbed me and turned us out of our home. Why did I tell you these things—then he betrayed and insulted your trust—ah! you should have left him to *my* vengeance!"

He was old—his life lay all behind him—they might do with him what they pleased, if she were spared. Better than dying slowly of grief, *ma parole!* a man never changes after sixty years of age. He paced up and down her little room—the tears saving his brain from madness. Clarice was just waiting for death, and he was not by her side.

"Will they kill you, and place you in

the cold damp grave—shut you away underneath a stone—my sweet?" he went on, leaning his head on his hands. "Oh! why did you not let your father avenge you, my Clarice—your father who is old and loves you, and curses his remaining years without you?"

He thought of the millionaires—the monopolists of the earth—who sent thousands of young lives to their graves, while they prayed in their churches for more gain, so that they might indulge in luxuries and pampering, their wives clothed in splendour and jewels, as they trampled on the weak, and gloried in their greed. He recollected hearing a clever man say that the books depicting refined vice wrapt up under a hypocritical pretence of virtue, were what the wealthy world preferred as stimulants to its jaded tastes. But he had asked for nothing but honest labour, simple fare, pure living, and Clarice. All had been denied him. His wife had forsaken him—and his love for her had been great—his child in a moment of frenzy, had struck *and killed without meaning it!*

The suspense of waiting for her trial to be over seemed at last more than he could bear. He began to mutter to himself at intervals, then to talk aloud. He thought of her loving ways and girlish grace—how he had saved, and denied himself necessities in order to educate Clarice, so that she should know something of the joys and meaning of life, of intellect, of art, and of song.

He had made her happy, he knew, until lately—and this, oh God! was the end! Maddalena and her rich lover, who was still with her, would mock and say, "Giovanni—*ohè!* the fool! not able to save the child from a felon's dock." He went out into the deserted garden; a lark was singing by the laurel hedge; butterflies were winging their flight through the scented ambient air; but he loathed the fragrant odours and the masses of white and crimson bloom; he hated them as he had often hated life. Here was Clarice's favourite seat under the limes—here the book she had been reading ere they had arrested her. Clarice, who had daily fed the birds or any poor lost animal, and had even saved drowning flies—to kill at last herself. . . As Pellini looked up to-

day at the brazen sky, picturing his child's fine slenderness, her dainty skirts, her ivory throat and clustering hair, an old man came limping through some distant olive gardens—a neighbour, who crept somewhat timidly to his side. Rustics are robust and muscular—an extravagant grief alarms and unnerves them. Clouds drifted over the distant hills, the cypresses shrouded the end of the garden, wafts of aromatic breath floated from the pines. The old neighbour had news for the wretched father.

"They do say, Pellini, that the trial takes place to-morrow," he said abruptly. There was a strange expression about Pellini's features that frightened the other—a look sometimes seen in the anguished eyes of a dog, dying slowly of grief, of love, of loss and starvation.

"I shall be there," he muttered hoarsely.

"We're all of us a goin' too," added the old neighbour. "We've known her, ye see, from a child."

Pellini shuddered.

"D'ye think there will be a reprieve?" he faltered.

"She's got a terrible hard man against her; that public prosecutor is always fatal to those he is against. His austerity is remarkable, even for a great lawyer. He's put more criminals out of the world than—"

"If they would but kill me, instead of her!" burst from Pellini's lips.

"Would that be justice, friend?"

"Justice? There is none in the world, and they only give you law in those courts of ours. Never talk to me of justice."

"You're looking very ill, neighbour. Come to us and have a bit of nice hot dinner. Calf's head, sharp sauce, and artichokes fried," suggested the friend, who could always enjoy food, even at a funeral feast.

"Will she ever come back to me?" he asked, lifting his head, regardless of the other's presence.

"We shall know to-morrow," piped the old man, thinking of his dinner. Calf's head and sharp sauce was indeed a delicacy.

"It seems as if she is crying to me from the grave," he moaned, turning aside.



"IF THEY WOULD BUT KILL MR. INSTEAD OF HER."

Pellini was certainly going mad—never eating, never sleeping or resting night or day. Peeping through their blinds—his wife and he—they could see the old fellow in his garden, pacing to and fro with distracted gestures at hours when all sensible people were sound asleep in their beds. They began to think he was the sport of evil spirits, of unhallowed influences. He had got over Maddalena's loss so easily, they were astonished at the vehemence of his present agony, never guessing the depths of his nature. Their own insect-like grovelling, shallowness, and human mechanism made them totally inadequate to grapple with the problem of another's mental struggle. For Pellini was an unconscious poet, and only poets know what true heart-suffering means. Would she never return to him, so that he could welcome her as of old to his breast, feeling all his misery and loneliness depart at her touch, her voice, her youth, her smile? Ah! the white

blossoms of these peach and apple trees, that she had once so delighted in! And the old cherry tree, too, down near the disused well—he could see her with her golden, tossing hair, in her white or blue frock and big hat, with its floating ribbons laughing and dancing around it, with little children and young girls all holding out their aprons to catch the tempting fruit, as he threw the cherries down to them on the grass. Ah! happy days! There, too, was the old garden seat, where they used to sit at twilight and talk of many things—of the day's cares, toils and needs. But to-morrow he would know—ah, yes for sure—and if they brought Clarice in guilty, and condemned her to death, why he would quickly make a strong running noose and hang himself, so as to join her at the same time in heaven—or, it might be, hell. Heaven could not be heaven without her. Better stand outside its joys amidst the blackness and the flames, with the one creature that he loved.

The next day an imposing spectacle might be seen in the Court of Assizes where Clarice was to be tried for murder. Women, of course, of high and low degree were here, impatiently waiting the appearance of the prisoner. They delighted in blood sports, these frail, delicate creatures, from the patrician lady, who scorned every one beneath her in rank or wealth, to the smart "irregular," who preyed alike upon fools and rogues, when, how, and where she could. Many human beings resemble the crocodile, which does not so much chase its victims, as it lies in wait for them, and then speedily conquers and devours them at its leisure.

Women are often interested in witnessing another's degradation. It was the morbid curiosity ever aroused in the minds and senses of an indifferent multitude, gathered together to witness the torture of some unknown stranger in their midst. It evinces above all the ingenerate cruelty of the race.

"Here she is! Here she is!" at last broke the silence. Many rose to their feet to catch a better view of the prisoner; glasses were raised to scan her features. Pellini was among that callous crowd, alone. He had shaken off his garrulous neighbours. He was comparatively calm to-day; he knew what he should do.

Then Clarice entered—a slight, girlish figure in the half-crouching attitude of a hunted thing, with no more strength left in it to double on its pursuers or to run any longer. Attired in deep black, a thick veil covered her face. She appeared crushed beneath the weight of her anguish and shame, and trembled so visibly that she had to be supported and led to her seat. So tottering and feeble were her steps, it was evident that exhaustion had produced a temporary state of semi-collapse.

"She must soon lift her veil," whispered some ladies to each other. "Oh, how exciting it all is!—nearly as good as a bull-fight. To look at a murderess, who is sure to be executed, and sketched in all the best papers, is always so absorbing."

Women of the world are not so much cruel, as curious. They live on sensa-

tion. They are voluptuaries through instinct, wealth, luxury and indolence.

They suffer to enjoy, and enjoy to suffer. They like to add to, and to multiply their existence. Frivolity, vanity and self-indulgence—with lovers, gowns, music, entertainments and theatres, as a fine background, soothe their ignoble aims, their jaded senses, their well-groomed bodies, and often wretched souls.

They care neither for thought, sympathy, art, nor intellect; they must be simply amused, admired, startled, entranced, adored. A quiet life is their horror, every social triumph must be glorified in print. Incapable of accomplishing anything great, they are mere fashion-plates, but must have emotion—as shallow, generally speaking, as themselves. To be well-gowned is invariably their principal aim in life, for to be well-gowned is to be effective—and to be respected by men. Eye-worship is offered them from morning to night, and it is all that their artificiality requires. Narrow-minded and self-centred, they are generally snobs at heart.

"They say, too, she is simply lovely," cried a young girl, seizing her mother's opera-glass, and turning it smartly on Clarice. "She is sure to be condemned to death. Papa said so this morning, at breakfast, as I was eating my shrimp patty and second roll."

"Hush, darling, we must be very quiet: it is a most serious case. I feel almost as if in church," replied her pampered mother. "Oh! if I could only pass you my powder-box, love, your nose is getting red, and the Duke of Villanuova just behind—we can chatter and enjoy ourselves, you know, when we have seen the last of her."

Those who thought a rapt or pathetic expression became them, posed as tearful and sympathetic, when they only studied how to look best and please their lovers, or it might be long disillusioned husbands. Clarice, quivering like a wounded thing, was realising her position—the keenness of the glances turned upon her. When would the trial commence? The suspense was bringing on a ghastly sensation of breathlessness, and exhaustion.

And then those dreadful women! She

heard their partially suppressed chattering, the slight laughs, the mindless surmises. She knew their painted eyes were riveted on hers. They might have been at a fashionable *matinée* or concert.

Five minutes passed—long, oppressive, insupportable—then another three. The full force of those intolerable glances were still on the accused as if she were a poor *débutante* or artiste, unable to bribe or cajole her critics, or some wild animal of a novel species, safely caged beneath lock, bar and chain. Oh! the torture the human eye can strike. Clarice had not belonged to a family in a high-class social position they knew, or rather had been told. This, however, increased the general excitement, even the tired reporters evincing some interest in the case. Many of the crowd had seen Clarice at various places of amusement, or when visiting the town for shopping, etc., and all were stirred to universal admiration of her marvellous beauty as she suddenly lifted her veil. It was the fine, child-like face of a Beatrice di Cenci.

The ladies smiled, sniffed at their bottles of smelling-salts, fanning themselves vigorously with almost insect-like pertinacity and patience, watching every glance and movement of the accused. Especially were they interested when she raised her hand to her brow—the little, white, nervous hand, small as a child's, that yet had had the strength to kill. . . . Who was it declared that extremely small hands and feet denoted criminal tendencies, they asked? Pellini, from behind, cursed them for their light frivolous tone; but after all, they were but human, the work of a ceaseless evolution, in which they struggled helplessly, rather than a special creation.

"How beautiful she is," a young woman was saying to her friend. "She ought to have been a superb actress with a big banking account, and had the world at her feet, instead of figuring here, a ruined, stupid criminal."

Foolish indeed, to take anything tragically in a world which is only successfully pillaged by beautiful fools of the lowest organism. Anything brilliant, loving, true or real is not wanted in a sphere governed by externals, where

parasites abound and thrive, and humbug or roguery holds the field.

"I'm certain I should have fainted dead off long ere this," whispered a young girl to another—"the hardened wretch."

"Rise, prisoner," said the stern voice of the President, amid the terrible silence.

With a convulsed shudder Clarice gazed around, longing to catch a glimpse of her father's face, then rose to her feet, and slightly pressing her brow to still its throbs, threw her veil further back. An aureole of golden hair surrounded that piteous face with its extraordinary pallor. Surely it was a martyr at the stake, not a criminal, who faced them, and a murmur of admiration ran through the crowd.

Then the examination commenced. The accused, partly through weakness, which seemed to paralyse her forces, replied in a feeble, half-audible voice—her great violet eyes fixed on the questioner. This caused him to insist on her speaking louder. Her timidity appeared lessened by his coarse brutality; she confessed herself "guilty" in a calm voice, "but without intent to kill."

She was nearly twenty-two years of age, she said, and had been wooed by a man to whom she had long given her heart. Latterly she had ascertained that he had injured her father and betrayed her innocence and trust. An anonymous letter from a former victim had revealed his treachery. Stung deeper than she could bear, in their last quarrel, by his taunts and mockery, she had suddenly seized a Chinese dagger that was lying on a small side-table, and plunged it into his breast, without for a moment intending to inflict a mortal wound. It had been done in a moment of madness, an irresistible impulse. Assured by his own lips that this was to be their final interview, that he had never loved her, but had betrayed and forsaken her for a caprice, a cloud of blood suddenly seemed to pass across her eyes and brain, and she had struck the traitor, not meaning to kill him, but to avenge her own and her father's wrongs. And as she spoke in her sweet, pleading tones, her beautiful eyes fixed on the President, a wave of public

sympathy swept through the Court that reached Pellini in his agony, kneeling apart with uplifted hands, praying for his darling with parched lips and heavy sighs. He understood now all that she had suffered, only why not have left the traitor to him?

Clarice passed a small white handkerchief nervously over her brow ; she was

fidelity, or of a man's treachery was absurd. Men were but men, they took their pleasure as it came, in an irresponsible way. Pellini listened awe-struck, horrified. Was it possible that his beautiful Clarice could thus have dragged herself through the mire? And under these accusations, which were partly false and aggravated her danger,



"SHE HAD SUDDENLY SEIZED A DAGGER"

glad that strength had been given her to speak, yet she was scarcely conscious of her actions. There was more to come ; ten minutes had passed, and they were dragging out portions of her former life, which were by no means favourable as thus coloured and portrayed. She was depicted as frivolous, vain, capricious—for her to talk of her

she could only cower and tremble, her poor head bent, her heart throbbing till she could scarcely breathe. The words of the lawyer representing the family of the dead man were beating into her brain ; they confused her senses still more.

After the lapse of a few seconds, during an ominous pause, another murmur agitated the Court.

For the Public Prosecutor had risen, and those who had heard his keenness in debate, his austerity, eloquence and force, knew how severe he could be in dealing with the accused.

"Poor thing! She is now at his mercy," whispered one pitying soul to another. "She has suffered, I am really sorry for her; she was betrayed and forsaken. Oh! it is indeed a painful world!"

"It is only what one must expect in dealing with men; to be weak is to be lost. And it is so absurd to take them seriously. Women seldom have a fair chance. The one thing is to be guided by the head, and to keep the heart cool."

The friend was a philosopher.

Clarice turned an imploring glance towards the Public Prosecutor. He had the power to send her to death. . . . A suffocated sigh rose from his breast, his massive frame shook, his eyes dilated, and something in the tone and voice of the orator expressed hidden, infinite distress. For this cold, severe man, whose examinations were always so much dreaded by prisoners, had once loved the accused girl with a passion that had undermined his happiness and peace.

He recovered himself in a second, and none present guessed those mental struggles.

Ah! he had loved her with all the extravagance of a first passion. And the perfect love of a good man, with delicate tastes, high appreciation, and reverence for women, is not a thing to be lightly held. Your cold sensualist has no idea of the meaning of love. Wonder, admiration, and homage at the sight of her beauty, pride and reserve had paved the way for an eternal love. And she was here! Had she not ultimately tortured his noble heart with her coquettish ways and impulses, as he became better acquainted with her, smiled at his earnest pleading, lured him on only to let the weight of disillusion and disappointment bury alike his hopes and joys? Mad with love, he had thrown himself at her feet, disregarding his dignity as a famous lawyer, and the maturity that should have commanded respect. And he had received nothing

but girlish mockery. But now God had given her into his hands! Here was vengeance if you like. In the name of human justice he could consign her to a horrible death, he could bring her in "Guilty," if he chose, in all her youth and beauty. He could plant death's kiss on those pale lips, and strike fresh terror into those dim and mournful eyes. The bridal chamber he could conduct her to, might be the sterile tomb. She had wounded his soul, his brain, his highest sentiments and faiths, his self-esteem and belief in himself, and only by degrees had his wonderful intellect conquered weakness, and his equilibrium been re-established. But his heart had silently cankered, and nothing, no one, could heal its eternal wound.

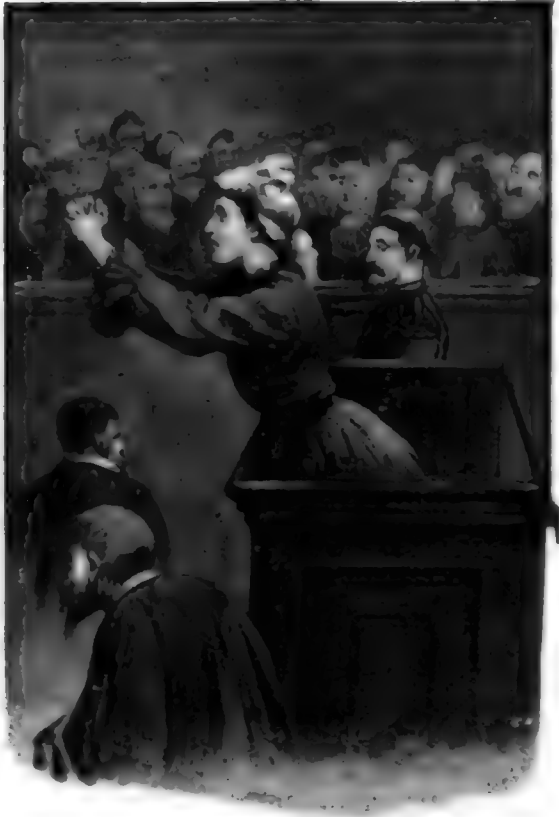
Recognising him, with a cry, Clarice started and momentarily covered her face.

"Mercy! mercy!" at last she faltered, with extended hands, realising this man's power, disdain and possible hatred of her. "Mercy! for Christ's sake."

"You shall have justice," he answered.

Just then the sun illumined her beauty, shining through one of the dusty windows of the old Court; then its beams slowly faded, and she was left in a mysterious shadow, harmonising with her nervous melancholy—her passionate dread.

How he pitied and still loved her. However harshly he might deal with her, nothing could kill that love or undo the past. It was a portion of the imperishable part of him, which in a disembodied state still knew and remembered. Would nothing ease the pain of the moral ulcer eating into his heart-strings? Had he not disdained life, men, and the fame and wealth he had earned? And the more he disdained the material, the actual, and the visible, the more tenderly he had recalled the spiritual ecstasy of his love, even in his defeat and humiliation. All his magisterial state, the homage of friends, of even kings, counted as dross beside it. The faint fragrance of those delicate faded hopes still charmed his senses in memory. He could hardly pass or see a flower she had worn or that he had given her, without a pang. Eternally



"'MERCY! MERCY!' AT LAST SHE FALTERED"

adored was this fair woman, with that aureole of golden hair, the small sweet face, the violet eyes, lit now with a feverish light, the lips, grey and blanched as those of a corpse. Months and years could not change his grief or his regret, or check his vain imaginings of that lost, beloved phantom. Ordinary women seemed so dull, and coarse, compared with her; they either bored or disgusted him. At night, in dreams, his empty arms were outstretched as if to embrace her, every nerve was concentrated in vain fancies; the sacred warmth of their first kiss by the cypress, when the moon had irradiated her young loveliness, still penetrated and inflamed his soul. Nothing could extinguish this love, a whole eternity could never change his passion. He should be waiting for her in the next world.

Pellini watched this famous orator who held his child's life in his hands. He had ceased praying, he was listening acutely. The great lawyer felt a sudden access of slow, sensual gladness steal through his veins and sweep aside his

ethereal visions. It was the momentary triumph of the flesh. She must be mute under his attack, mute under his verbal massacre and death-sentence, even when she most longed to disclaim, to grovel, to implore. . . . He must not watch her delicate beauty, that drawn, ravaged face, nor see those piteous eyes entreating mercy. He must simply do his duty just as if she were any ordinary criminal—without pity or remorse.

But could he?

He turned his critical glance sharply away from her. That gentle attitude, supplicating pity, as with hands still clasped, and eyes uplifted to his, she stood before him, sent a fresh wave of passion through his every nerve and vein. He dared not meet her appealing gaze. So he remained motionless and silent, shading his eyes with his hand from time to time, his colour deepening, as if anxious to gather well together and condense the crude facts of the case. Then at last he spoke, and his diction was, as ever, clear and forcible. He was impressively eloquent, that fascinating eloquence, such as only a fine and trained orator can revel in. He spoke slowly, with measured emphasis and skill.

Link by link he sifted, then pieced the evidence, until he came to the commission of the crime. People here shuddered and held their breath. For he had paused, then re-continued, when a groan from Pellini, partly re-echoed by the public, interrupted the fluent course of his speech. The accused, with a faint cry, had sunk on her knees, her hair loosened from its comb, streamed around her in golden waves. Pallid, lost, unable to control her nerves or senses, she suddenly forced him, through her very agony, to glance in her direction, and he, too, viewing this anguished *abandon*, turned pale to the lips. No—he could not deliver her to death, what would she say to him when they met afterwards in the silent Shades? He loved her well enough to die for her, he worshipped her still, he desired her as in the old, dear days. Never had she looked so fair, so sweet. The blood flew to his brain, the desire to avenge was merged in a longing to

cheer, to soothe. The face and form of this beloved woman before him in her black draperies; that slight form, kneeling in humiliation, in terror and in prayer before him, before, too, this crowd of upturned, unfamiliar faces, reversed all his former decision, touched the depths of his great soul. Clarice faced him in a felon's dock, and he—he was here to rescue, not to destroy; to save, not to condemn. He no longer gloated over the punishment and anguish of a suffering creature who had once scorned him. He was a man, almost an angel, waiting to deliver her from torture, for love's sake. No longer he beheld the woman who had ruined his life and dealt him the ache of a hopeless love, she was once more his darling child, his adored Clarice. Every thought or prompting of revenge faded, a mist of unshed tears shut her from his sight. His words should not condemn, they should rescue. He would give her life. . . With a gesture commanding the warders to lift her to her seat, he recommenced. Then slowly, with subtle skill and the art that tenderness and love alone teach, he attacked the case that had been made out against her. He was no longer a Public Prosecutor, but a man defending the being dearest to him on earth. Pellini sobbed as he listened. Would he save her yet, this great lawyer who understood so well all the injury and pain she had endured? And through the induction of his fine psychology, he proved the intolerable reflex action left on some sensitive women's brains by the effects of pain. Its excesses were fatal, its results abnormal. Acute suffering affected different organisms in wholly unexpected ways. Solitude, loss, brooding over injuries, led to misery; balked affections, so rarely understood, were more than the result of mere emotional cravings; they were vital, and often unreasonable. There were certain forms of mental agony that none could fathom; sane to all outward appearance, the martyr was, psychologically speaking, irresponsible. Then pale with passion, he proved all the torture, the waiting, the disappointment, and the final insulting cruelty Clarice had endured. And with such spontaneous fervour, with so much

eloquence and force did he picture her own and her father's ruined lives, that by degrees the public, who before had been convinced of her guilt, now began to believe that this frail girl had indeed yielded to a temporary aberration, and was hence not responsible for the crime. He did not tell them that it was his present she had seized, the Chinese dagger he had given her, when he had returned from one of his Eastern wanderings.

His speech was a triumph of forensic eloquence and skill—his deep voice rang musically through the Court, in turn with god-like resonance, softness and power. So great was his oration that a burst of applause rang out at its conclusion. Ah! they little knew, he sadly reflected, that he, who had experienced all the intensity of passion and had been defrauded of its pleasures, could so well paint the hidden depths of an unhappy woman's soul.

After he had spoken, the lawyer representing the family of the murdered man, sought to destroy the favourable impression created by the other's eloquence. But in vain. The reply of the Public Prosecutor was so emphatic, yet so persuasive, so all-convincing, yet so dignified and pathetic, that every one present was certain that the accused must be inevitably acquitted; and the public wondered why this man who was habitually so hard and merciless towards criminals, should in this instance have only sought to save. Why was it? Because she was a remarkably pretty woman, some of the men whispered to each other, with smiles and shrugs. Only one present understood his real reason, and that one—the accused. Love's divine flame illuminating his heart, had taught him pity. Clarice was acquitted.

And the look she turned on him from under her long black lashes as the colour faintly returned to her cheek and brow, when they met, with its silent and impassioned meaning, its inarticulate gratitude and rapture, satisfied even him, gave him good grounds for future hope. At last she loved him, at last he would hold her to his breast, feel the throb of her pulses, mirror his eyes in hers. No longer must he only offer

his devotion, hers met and was fused in it. It was no inanimate object he should possess, but a woman with every nerve throbbing with new emotions.

So once again "the eternal feminine"

triumphed, while Pellini, weeping for joy, kneeling at the feet of their deliverer, poured out his passionate thanks and gratitude, and kissed his hands as they encircled the form of Clarice.



"POURED OUT HIS PASSIONATE THANKS AND GRATITUDE"

Where there are no Railways

WRITTEN BY ROBERT L. JEFFERSON, F.R.G.S.

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS

WHILE Englishmen are so used to rapid methods of locomotion by rail or boat, that it is hard to realise the meaning of the word caravan, those long strings of camels which toil over the desert wastes of Africa, China, and Central Asia. Yet in those lands where railways there are not, the caravan is pre-eminently the method used for the transportation of thousands upon thousands of tons of merchandise from one end of a continent to the other. The ship of the desert, as the camel is called, is one of the most curious animals in existence. Patient, sullen and unruffled, he jogs along at a three-miles-an-hour gait from sunrise to sundown, bearing on his back nearly half-a-ton of merchandise, requiring no water or food for many days at a stretch, obeying always the call of its driver—an extraordinary beast, without temper, without intelligence at all, it would seem; and yet, if the camel did not exist, the traversing of the great desert plains of the world would be practically an impossibility.

In my travels in Asia I have seen many caravans, principally in Siberia and Turkestan, these being in every way the counterpart of those which traverse the great Sahara desert from Cairo to the West, or those in Arabia, in the great desert tracks bordering upon the Afghan frontier.

The introduction of the iron road threatens, however, to obliterate this historical means of transport. Siberia itself will in a few years' time be covered with a long line of railroad;

Central Asian caravans have been reduced in importance by the introduction of the Trans-Caspian Railroad, which runs from Samarcand to the Caspian Sea, and will in another five or six years extend to the very borders of China.

But what a picturesque sight it is to see a caravan on the march!—a string of a hundred camels or more, each one so loaded with goods that it is almost indistinguishable, each camel being guided by a string attached to an iron skewer through its nose, the string being hitched on to the beast preceding it.

Orenburg, on the borders of Asia, is the great *entrepôt* for the merchandise of the whole country south of it. For many years caravans have toiled across the inhospitable deserts of Kizil and Kara-kum, bringing from Bokhara and Afghanistan rich carpets; from Chinese Turkestan silks and other valuable fabrics; from the country of Merv thousands of bales of camel-hair and lambs'-wool, discharging their loads at the great laager on the banks of the Ural river—the biggest laager, it is safe to say, in the whole world. In spite of the fact that the Trans-Caspian Railroad has absorbed a great deal of this traffic, Orenburg is still a great and active centre for the reception of caravan goods. We give herewith several photographs of the laager, showing the goods which have been brought thousands of miles across the desert, and showing also some of the caravans departing on their return journey. Most of the camels belong to the nomadic tribes who inhabit the

steppe and the desert. These people are called Khirghiz, and are wanderers of the most pronounced type. They do not live in houses, but, like gipsies of another clime, wander from place to place, rarely stopping more than a day in one spot. Their occupation is the breeding of sheep and camels; and here it may be remarked that a perfectly-grown camel can be purchased for such a small sum as £4.

bagatelle to the sender. Arrived at Orenburg, the caravan discharges at the laager, and the camels are sent forward to forage on their own account in the steppe at the south of the river, waiting until the Khirghiz have rested from the journey, and are prepared to execute a return commission from Orenburg merchants, who send European goods into the Central Asian wilderness.



THE GREAT LAAGER IN ORENBURG, SHOWING THE MERCHANDISE BROUGHT BY THE CARAVANS FROM CENTRAL ASIA

Many Khirghiz, although they know not the value or meaning of money, are yet extremely rich, their riches consisting of camels. They hire themselves out to carry goods from one end of the desert to another, receiving payment, as a rule, in kind. A man possessing a hundred camels will easily get a commission to carry wool or carpets from Bokhara to Orenburg, the payment being so absurdly small, according to our ideas, that it is a mere

In Siberia, especially in winter, the whole of that great road extending from Urga in Mongolia to Tomsk, presents one long unbroken line of caravans. It should be mentioned that Russia is one of the greatest tea-consuming countries on the face of the earth, and most of the tea which is used is brought overland from China. Indian tea is absolutely unknown in the land of the Czar, nor will the big Russian merchants purchase tea which has been

sent from China by ship. Overland it must come. First of all, it is brought on camel-back from the big tea-growing districts south of the Great Wall, across the Gobi desert, or "Shamo," the sea of sand, until at Urga it is transferred to the sledges, some drawn by horses and some by camels, which are in waiting. Krasnoiarsk, on the banks of the Yenesei, is the receiving depôt for the major portion of the tea from China, and here are many men who have made millions of roubles out of the tea traffic. The transportation of tea, indeed, across Siberia is one of the most noteworthy features of that extraordinary country.

Some years ago, when the merchants began to realise the importance of insurance, many of them adopted this means of securing financial safety to their caravans, which were frequently attacked by brigands and the valuable tea stolen. One merchant, more wily than his fellows, conceived what must be readily conceded as a rather ambitious scheme. He insured his caravans heavily, but, going one better, hired a gang of desperate thieves who stole his own tea, and carried it into the forest, waiting until they received word that the insurance had been paid, and then bringing it by a circuitous route into

Krasnoiarsk. This tale is told in Siberia with a considerable amount of unction; for the Siberian, especially the exile class, seem as proud of their thieving capabilities as they are of whatever business qualities they might possess.

Returning to Orenburg, the departure of a caravan for the south is an interesting spectacle. The goods to be transported are first of all carried by telega or tarantass to the great laager. Here a government official inspects and marks them. The Khirghiz drivers go out into the steppe and collect their camels, they are brought into the laager, lined up, and are given a tremendous feed of of all sorts of things, black bread being the principal edible. Water is given them by the tubful, for the drivers are careful to see that their beasts start out with a full hump, which may have to last them for seven to nine days.

The Khirghiz, who are Mohammedans, have a peculiar method of celebrating the starting of a caravan. The night previous to the commencement of a desert march, the drivers are hospitably entertained by their fellow Khirghiz. A spot in the steppe or adjacent to the river is secured, and revelries are held. The principal drivers of the caravan are *fêted* to their hearts' content, sheep are killed and boiled whole, koumiss—the



THE KHIRGHIZ FESTIVITIES PREVIOUS TO THE DEPARTURE OF A CARAVAN



DEPARTURE OF A CARAVAN FROM BOKHARA

only drink, bar water, of the nomads—flows plentifully. The feast is followed by singing and dancing, and sometimes the whole of the night is spent at these revelries, so that the drivers, with the advent of the sun, are compelled to go back to the laager and line up the camels.

Once under weigh, the caravan presents a curious sight, trailing as it does like a serpent over the steppe, the camels lumbering along with their quaint long steps, uttering now and again shrill nasal cries, resembling nothing so much as a hearty sneeze. On the backs of one or two of them the Khirghiz drivers rock and sway with the motion of the beasts. Other Khirghiz, mounted on horses, dash around them, shouting words of encouragement. The headman of the tribe will rush to the head of the caravan, and sprinkle handfuls of salt before the feet of the first camel. For a distance of at least five or six versts this rabble keeps with the caravan. Then at last they stop, there is a final wild scream and a cracking of knouts, the Khirghiz drivers raise their hands together in their token of adieu to their fellows, the horsemen turn and speed back to Orenburg, whilst the caravan, a hundred strong, and under the charge of only three or four men, plods on its way into the wilderness,

Many stories are told of the loss of caravans in the desert; but, strange as it may appear, they are very rarely attacked, unless it leaks out that the goods carried are extremely valuable. The Turcomans, or Bashi-Bazouks of Turkestan, are the great terror of all caravan drivers. Swooping down upon them in the night, like a horde of wild beasts, these Turcomans will in a few minutes kill every man of the party; and not only that, but slaughter the whole of the camels for the neck wool, which they carry to the south and sell to Bokharan merchants. As for the goods, they are rifled, and the choicest specimens taken away to be sold to rich Khivans, Bokharans, or others of the Central Asian tribes. Occasionally it is the practice to send caravans under escort, but only when the goods carried are of more than ordinary value.

Many caravans get completely lost. They start away from Bokhara or Orenburg under the best of auspices, but, after being reported at one or two places, disappear entirely, never more to be heard of. The reason for this is ascribed to the drivers becoming ill and dying, as it were, at their posts, the camels breaking loose, wandering into the desert to die themselves, and be buried in the deep, drifting sands.

Siberia has for many years been a

land of caravans, but with the rapidly approaching completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, those long lines of telegas or native carts, stretching in an almost unbroken string from the Chinese frontier to the Ural Mountains, are threatened with extinction. In Siberia, winter has been the great time for the caravans. Tea which has been grown and dried in the summer months is sent from China over the Gobi Desert, or Sea of Sand, to Urga and Kiakta. Here it arrives just as the first Siberian snows have spread their white carpets across that enormous land, and the rivers and lakes are frozen sometimes to their very bottoms. Kiakta is the busiest of spots. Here the Chinese carriers unload their camels, and the valuable tea is placed upon the sledges preparatory to its transit over some five thousand versts to the Ural Mountains.

The Bolshoi Siberski Doroga, or great Siberian highway, passes from Kiakta by the southern base of Lake Baikal to Irkutsk, then through the enormous forest district to the banks of the Yenisei at Krasnoiarsk, then over a mountainous region to Tomsk, after which the great Barabinski and Tartar steppes have to be crossed before Omsk and Tiumen are reached, the latter town being, even to the present day, the great *entrepôt* for the tea destined for Russia. At Tiumen is the terminus of the Trans-Ural Railway, or was until the completion of the line further south at Cheliabinsk.

The amount of tea carried in one year from China to European Russia has never been properly estimated. Once it passes the Urals it goes north, south, east and west—to the Black Sea, to the arctic regions of Finland, to the littoral of the Baltic, or into the German speaking Polish provinces hard upon German territory. But it is a fact that from Kiakta to Omsk, a distance of over four thousand miles, the head of one caravan is within sight of the tail of its predecessor. Nor is the carriage of tea over Siberia the sole necessity for enormous caravans. Everyone has heard of Nijni-Novgorod, the scene of the great annual fair. Nijni-Novgorod is one of the oldest of Russian cities, and its fair is renowned throughout the whole of the

world. The normal population of this Volga-side city is eighty thousand, but during the five to six weeks of summer days, when the fair is in progress, Nijni's population frequently exceeds three hundred thousand.

Goods of all descriptions are here bartered for, and the largest percentage of these goods are Siberian or Central Asiatic ware. Therefore in the summer, on the high road of Siberia or from the Khirghiz steppes or the mountainous districts of Chinese Turkestan, great caravans are ever on the move *en route* to or from Nijni-Novgorod. As a matter of fact, many Asiatic merchants doing business at the fair of Nijni-Novgorod are on the move from year end to year end; that is to say, for ten months out of the twelve they are either *en route* with goods to the fair of Nijni-Novgorod or on the homeward journey with their empty telegas but full pockets.

But Nijni-Novgorod has seen its palmiest days. Now that that civilising influence—the railway, is creeping even into the remotest parts of Asia, Nijni-Novgorod declines in favour with the trader. The possibility of sending goods quickly by rail to any part of the empire offers greater inducements to the Siberian merchant. Hitherto no method has been open to him but to send his goods by road many thousands of miles to a market, necessitating an enormous expense in horses, carts, and labour. But now, with an administration earnestly endeavouring to promote the Asiatic resources of Russia, palmy days are in store for the enterprising Siberian.

With the completion of the network of railways and canals which Russia has in contemplation, a feature of Russian life will have received its death-blow. The organisation of caravans, and the breeding of horses and camels to make up these caravans, have been for many generations the employment of thousands upon thousands of the Asiatic subjects of the Czar. Already in Russia there is a bewailing that the coming of the railway will mean the ruin of Siberia and Central Asia. This is, of course, an erroneous idea, but then the Asiatic is not a man of progress. What was good for his father is good enough for him, and he resents with all

the influence at his command anything tending to alter the *status quo*. Arguments are of little avail, but those few who have been convinced are now reaping the benefit. That with the practical compulsion of all traders to take advantage of the railway, the whole

country will benefit goes without saying. It means the obliteration of the time-honoured caravan, but from the ashes of the great business which those caravans have represented a greater and more profitable trade must surely come about.



NIJNI-NOVGOROD, TO WHICH MOST OF THE SIBERIAN CARAVANS TRAVEL

GRAPHOLOGY COMPETITION ; OR, CHARACTER INDICATED BY HANDWRITING.

"THE LUDGATE" GRAPHOLOGY COUPON.

READ OUR NEW MONTHLY COMPETITION, and see how we propose to test your character, and give PRIZES TO OUR READERS.

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- (1.) As known to himself.
- (2.) As known to his fellow-men.
- (3.) As known to his Maker.

This test has been accepted by such writers as Goethe, Scott, and Disraeli, each of whom believed in the possibility of judging a man's character from his writing. But it must be distinctly understood that character can only be delineated if the writing is spontaneous and unstudied; a feigned hand will naturally destroy all possibility of a correct reading.

RULES.

- (1.) Write in your ordinary handwriting, upon a sheet of white paper, these lines:—"Could we forbear dispute and practise love, We should agree as angels do above."
- (2.) Sign the above paper with your usual signature, *cut out the Graphology Coupon found above*, and forward both, with a *stamped addressed envelope* and twelve penny stamps, or Postal Order for 1/-, to "GRAPHO," at the Offices of THE LUDGATE, 14, Bedford Street, Strand.

Now for our novel competition: In connection with the above, we intend offering Three Prizes to the competitors whose characters are judged to be of the highest standard.

The three best characters that win the above prizes will be published on this page, and every other competitor will receive his or her delineation direct by post within a month, for which a stamped and addressed envelope is requested.

All the delineations of character from handwriting, when drawn out by our Graphologist, shall be carefully examined by a COMMITTEE OF THREE EXPERTS, and, according to the decision—which will admit of no question—shall the prizes be awarded.

First Prize of £2 will be given to the competitor whose character is judged to be of the highest standard by the Committee.

Second Prize of £1 will be given to the competitor whose character is judged to be second best.

Third Prize of 10/- to the third best.

All contributors competing for our prizes must send in for their characters as soon as possible before AUGUST 30TH. Applications should be made as early as possible in the month.

FOR LOVE OF AN INFIDEL: A Romance of Afghan WAR.

WRITTEN BY MAJOR HAMILTON FAIRLEIGH. ILLUSTRATED BY
G. M. DODSHON

A CRIMSON sky, illumined faintly by the lingering rays of a setting sun, was shedding its soft radiance over a beautiful valley in the heart of Afghanistan. The valley, watered by a network of channels, was green and fertile, an oasis in the midst of rocky hills and barren plains. In this favoured spot were fields of yellow corn ripe for the harvester's sickle, and fruit trees with limbs bending to the ground under their rosy, dimpled burdens. Alas! strife and contention, born of men's evil passions, had penetrated to the "Happy Valley," whither the flood of invasion had rolled with irresistible impetus. Christian and Moslem were at death-grips with each other; the streams ran red with human blood; the corn lay bruised and crushed from the tread of tramping feet, the fruit-trees were torn and shattered by bullets.

In the corner of an orchard, a little band of British soldiers, sole remnant of a battalion seven hundred strong that had marched from their encampment that morning in jubilant anticipation of an easy victory over the despised foe, were making their last desperate stand against overwhelming hordes of fierce fanatics.

"Steady, men! Aim low, and don't waste your ammunition," ordered their officer, a tall, yellow-haired stripling, in clear, calm tones. "Remember, we've the credit of the old corps to maintain!"

Even as he spoke, a bullet from a

jezail passed through his left shoulder, causing the blood to flow freely; but he stood his ground bravely, and gave no sign that he was hurt. From hill, ravine and thicket, the enemy continued to pour in a deadly fire on the devoted band. Soldier after soldier fell, till the survivors numbered not more than twelve. Still the brave fellows stood firm and undaunted, with tightly-compressed lips and knitted brows, showing a resolute front, and determined to sell their lives dearly. The Afghans, gathering courage as the fire of their opponents slackened, began to advance cautiously, preparatory to making their final rush; and a large body of them succeeded in gaining the shelter of a ravine within a hundred paces of the British position. Their dark scowling faces could be plainly discerned peering out from between the rocks and boulders.

"Now it has come," said the Lieutenant, tightening his grip on his sword, as he saw swarms of turbaned warriors jump up on to the level ground. "Out to meet them, lads, and drive your bayonets well home! It's no use staying here to be killed like rats in a trap!"

With a ringing cheer, the British soldiers sprang after their leader, and cleft their way like a steel wedge into the heart of the thick surging mass of foemen. The leading Afghans, who had given way before the vigorous onset of their opponents, now closed in, and the little band of British soldiers, jammed inextricably in the midst of the enemy,

were unable to use their weapons freely. The Lieutenant was felled by a heavy blow on the forehead dealt by an unseen hand, and his followers, after a valiant resistance, were all cut down or speared.

When the last soldier had fallen, the Afghans began to fight among themselves like wolves for the possession of the spoil, tearing the blood-stained uniforms from the still quivering bodies of the slain. After every article of clothing

the carrion feast with the troops of gaunt, snarling, long-haired village dogs that, with yellow gleaming fangs and red, bloodshot eyes, had been prowling around the outskirts of the fight in eager anticipation of a meal on human flesh.

It chanced that when the Lieutenant fell, two of the enemy bayoneted by the soldiers had fallen over him, concealing his body under their bulky *choga*-clad forms; and it was not till the Afghans



"THE AFGHANS, WHO HAD GIVEN WAY BEFORE THE VIGOROUS ONSET OF THEIR OPPONENTS, NOW CLOSED IN."

had been stripped from the dead, and the white, inanimate faces had been hacked and mutilated out of all recognition, the corpses were tossed brutally aside. Then began the last act in the horrible drama, when clouds of vultures and other foul birds of prey came swooping earthwards in circling flights, stirring the air with the swish of their mighty pinions, to do battle over

began to remove their dead that he was discovered.

"Here is a Kafir dog that breathes still!" said a young warrior, as he dragged the officer's body from beneath the corpses of his countrymen. "We've winged the bird, not killed him; but I'll make a clean job of it this time."

Speaking thus, he knelt on the ground, took the head of the wounded man under

his left arm, and drawing from his girdle a heavy-bladed, keen-edged *chura* (knife), was about to draw it across his victim's throat, when it was snatched suddenly from his hand.

"What fool's work art thou about, Abdullah?" wrathfully exclaimed Muzzaffir Khan, the Afghan chief. "This man is an officer. See'st thou not the scabbard at his side? We'll take him alive, and demand his weight in gold as ransom."

There was some grumbling at this proposal among the Afghan soldiers, who knew that if a ransom were paid to Muzzaffir Khan they would not benefit much by the transaction; but the wily chief appeased them by allowing them to strip the body and to draw lots for the weapons and uniform, without claiming the lion's share of the spoil for himself.

Lieutenant Charles Linskill, with his bright blue eyes, rosy complexion, and crisp yellow hair clustering in thick curls all over his head, his tall symmetrical figure, broad chest, and rounded arms swelling with muscle, was a magnificent specimen of Anglo-Saxon manhood.

"The unbeliever is a fine *jawan* (youth), and would fetch a handsome price in any slave market," growled Muzzaffir Khan, surveying with grim approval the goodly proportions of his captive.

"The Farangis are an effeminate race, and I did not know they bred such men among them."

His wound having been roughly bandaged, Linskill was tied on to a horse behind one of the Afghans, who rode in the midst of a strong body of mounted men with Muzzaffir Khan at their head. A march of about ten miles brought them to a large village of mud houses, surrounded by castellated walls, set with bastions and watch-towers. Halting in front of a broad heavily-barred gate, on the side of the main street, Muzzaffir Khan dismounted, and ordered his prisoner, now faint and exhausted from loss of blood, to be lifted from his horse and carried into the house.

The chief's house, a double storied mud building, with two wings running at right angles to the central façade,

gave on to a spacious courtyard. Linskill was conducted to a small room in the upper story of the left wing, and the door was locked upon him. This apartment, dimly lighted by a narrow grating overlooking the courtyard, was destitute of furniture; and, with its bare mud walls and floor presented a strikingly uninviting and desolate appearance. Presently the door opened, and a negro slave appeared, bringing a bundle of straw, a mess of rice and meat, and some water in an earthen vessel, all of which he deposited on the floor, and then retired, leaving the prisoner alone for the night.

The next morning Linskill was visited by Muzzaffir Khan, accompanied by the village *hakeem* (doctor). The *hakeem* dressed the prisoner's wound with a decoction of herbs, comforting him with the assurance that no bone had been touched, and that it would be quite healed in a few days. Linskill was now ordered to put on an Afghan costume, consisting of a long shirt, wide *pyjamas* (drawers), and a red *kular* (conical cap) swathed by a long white turban.

The Afghan chief visited his captive frequently, and while abstaining from making any allusion to the current war, listened with much interest to everything Linskill told him about England and the manners and customs of the Farangis. These conversations were conducted in Persian, a language with which Linskill was well acquainted, having studied it during his spare time in cantonments, though he had never anticipated that his knowledge would stand him in such good stead. When Linskill had regained his strength, Muzzaffir Khan informed him that if he would promise to make no attempt to escape, he would be allowed to walk daily through the streets under charge of an escort, but that any infringement of his word would be visited with instant death.

Linskill, thankful to obtain a measure of liberty, gave the required promise. Strictly guarded as he was, he believed that escape was impossible, and that his wisest course would be to resign himself to the inevitable, and to wait patiently till he should be released by ransom or through interchange of prisoners.

The handsome Farangi, with the blue

eyes and golden hair, who, though a captive, comported himself with the dignity of an emperor, created a great sensation among the Afghan villagers, and he was followed through the streets every day by crowds of spectators. Linskill soon began to feel his confinement irksome and intolerable, and to regret that he had given his parole. To a man of his fiery temperament, the dull monotony of his present existence was intensely galling. His wound was now quite healed; and, with returning strength and vigour, came the desire for action. It would have been better, he reflected, to have met with a soldier's death than to be doomed to languish in ignoble captivity while his companions in arms were fighting their country's battles.

There seemed to be a lull in the war, for the villagers had resumed their peaceful avocations and were busy gathering in the crops. Linskill tried in vain to extract information from Muzzaffir Khan concerning the course of events, the chief maintaining his usual reticence on that subject, and declining to satisfy his prisoner's curiosity.

One day Linskill became aware that something unusual had happened. There was a great stir and commotion in the village. A messenger had arrived with the important tidings that the English army, strengthened by reinforcements from India, was advancing through the district, and that a battle was imminent. The Afghan Commander-in-Chief had despatched messengers all over the country to summon the tribesmen to assist in repelling the hated invaders. The summons was eagerly responded to, for the Afghans are born fighting men. Every man capable of bearing arms, from striplings of fifteen years to greybeards of sixty, came forward to be enrolled under the green standard.

Linskill's life was in imminent danger. Some of the young Afghan warriors, exasperated by the news of a crushing defeat sustained by their countrymen at the hands of the British, clamoured for the blood of the captive Farangi. But wiser counsels prevailed, the older tribesmen knowing by experience that if they were to murder their prisoner, a terrible retribution would be wreaked by the

British. Besides, the prisoner was a valuable hostage, to slay whom would be like killing the goose with the golden eggs. It was decided, therefore, that he should be detained in his present quarters under the charge of the slaves of the household. The same evening, Muzzaffir Khan marched off at the head of his retainers to join the Afghan army advancing to meet the enemy.

Linskill's liberty was now at an end. The strictest guard was kept over him; the open-air exercise, which alone had made his captivity tolerable, was denied to him, and he was not allowed to leave the room in which he was confined. As the days dragged their weary length along, bringing no prospect of release, the weary captive, pining for freedom, grew utterly despondent and dejected. After the departure of Muzzaffir Khan he was treated with less consideration than before, and he grew to loathe the sight of the black grinning face of his jailor, Ghulam Mahomed, who seemed to gloat over his misery and helplessness. He could scarcely bring himself to eat the coarse fare thrown to him as to a dog, and would often send his meals away untouched. He became, in consequence, thin and emaciated, a shadow of his former self. How he longed for news of the war! But no tidings reached him, his sable janitor refusing surlily to answer his eager questions.

Linskill was standing, one afternoon, gazing listlessly through the iron grating on to the courtyard below, when he noticed a woman's face at the barred window in the opposite wing of the building. This window, which had always hitherto been jealously screened by a thick curtain, he had rightly conjectured to pertain to the women's apartments, but he had never seen any of the female members of the household. The woman, who, so far as he could discern, had an oval face, large dark eyes, and a slightly aquiline nose, was smiling, and—there was no doubt of it—making signals to him with her hand, whether significant of commiseration or of some warmer sentiment he was unable to determine. He knew something of the love of intrigue possessed by Afghan women, having heard many strange stories of the *affaires de cœur* between the

ladies of Kabul and English officers, during the period of the occupation of the Afghan capital by our troops in 1841; and, though no coxcomb, he could not doubt that his fair neighbour was in an unmistakable way intimating that she would not be averse to a flirtation. Was she one of the wives of Muzzaffir Khan, or was she a daughter of that chief? In any case, the situation was embarrassing for an engaged man, for Charles Linskill was the affianced husband of beautiful Grace Ainsleigh, the daughter of the Commissioner of Rakachee. With Grace's image present in his heart, the beguilements of the fair unknown found little favour in his eyes, and he withdrew hastily from the window.

At sunset the slave brought the usual meal of *kabob* and rice. Linskill put a morsel of meat into his mouth; but, finding it flavourless and insipid in taste, he spat it out, when, to his surprise, he noticed that the rejected morsel consisted of a tightly-compressed paper pellet. Unrolling it, he found a letter written in the Persian character, commencing as follows:—

"To the heart-ensnaring son of beauty, whose hair shineth like corn in the moonlight, whose eyes reflect the azure vault of heaven, whose cheeks resemble the blossom of a ripe peach." After several lines of panegyric on his personal appearance, calculated to bring a blush to the cheeks of a Phœbus Apollo, the letter intimated that Shirani, daughter of Muzzaffir Khan, was deeply enamoured of the son of the Emperor of Wilayet—so she styled him—was willing to sacrifice everything for his sake, to brave her father's wrath, to face any peril, to accompany him, if need were, to the end of the world. She besought him to flee with her, and unfolded an ingenious plan of escape. The cook, she explained, was in her confidence, and the only danger to be feared was from Ghulam Mahomed, the African slave, who kept guard day and night outside the prisoner's door. The slave was to be drugged and then strangled; and after he had been disposed of, a change of clothing—a fruit-seller's costume—and also some dye for staining face and beard would be brought by the cook into the prisoner's room. The coast clear,

Linskill was to slip out in the middle of the night, and make his way to the outskirts of the village, where he would find her, Shirani, disguised as a boy, with two horses ready to convey them to Kandahar. The writer concluded by begging her "heart's delight," in the event of his acceding to her request, to break the wooden skewer of the *kabob* in half, and, in case of refusal, to break it into three pieces.

"Phew," mused Linskill, after mastering the contents of this document. "This reads like a chapter out of the 'Arabian Nights.' A prettily-conceived plan, and a very tempting proposal! The girl's not half bad-looking either. But what would Grace think of the arrangement? I must intimate plainly to the fair Shirani that I cannot accept her sporting offer, though I fain would have written and explained the true state of the case. She will doubtless think me a poor sort of prince, but it can't be helped."

Having arrived at this decision, he broke the skewer deliberately into three pieces, in token of refusal, and then swallowed the letter to prevent discovery.

That night there was a bright moon, and Linskill, before lying down to rest, impelled by an irresistible curiosity, stationed himself at the window to note the result of his ungallant missive. He soon descried a movement at the curtain of the opposite lattice. A woman's face peered out at him; an arm was thrust through the iron bars, and he could distinctly see a dagger flashed menacingly towards him in the moonlight. Then the arm and dagger disappeared, and the curtain was drawn across the window.

The following day, news arrived that Muzzaffir Khan had been taken prisoner in a cavalry skirmish outside the walls of Kandahar, and that the British had agreed to exchange him for the captive officer. Linskill was accordingly conveyed to Kandahar, where the change of prisoners was effected. His comrades greeted him as one risen from the dead, and congratulated him warmly on his marvellous escape. After the famous battle of Kandahar, the war was practically at an end, and in a few months the troops returned to India.

Charles Linskill and Grace Ainsleigh were married at the Cantonment Church of Rakachee, and a handsomer pair were surely never seen. On the conclusion of the service, Linskill walked down the aisle with his beautiful bride on his arm amidst a hum of admiration from the entire congregation. At the porch was a carriage with a pair of white horses to convey the newly-wedded couple to the Commissioner's house, where a reception was to be held. The churchyard was crowded with a

dense throng of spectators, European and native, eager to catch a glimpse of the bride, while just outside the gate of the church compound crouched, unnoticed, a female figure enveloped in a dark blue mantle.

The bride and bridegroom had passed the gateway ; the bride had removed her hand from her husband's arm preparatory to entering the carriage, when the crouching female, shooting suddenly upright, sprang upon her with the bound of a tigress, and plunged a dagger deep



"THE CROUCHING FEMALE, SHOOTING SUDDENLY UPRIGHT, SPRANG UPON HER WITH THE BOUND OF A TIGRESS"

into her snowy bosom. Then, before any one could arrest her, she withdrew the reeking blade, and, with a savage cry of triumph, plunging it into her own breast, fell across the body of her victim. The life-blood of the two women welled forth and commingled in a thick stream staining the pure white robe of the newly-made bride with a deep crimson.

The veil of the dead murderess being removed, there were disclosed the features of a young Afghan girl of exceeding beauty, in whom Linskill recognised the ill-fated Shirani. The dagger with which the fatal blows had been struck bore on its blade, engraved in Persian characters, the following inscription: "I will suffer no rival to come between thee and thy beloved."

